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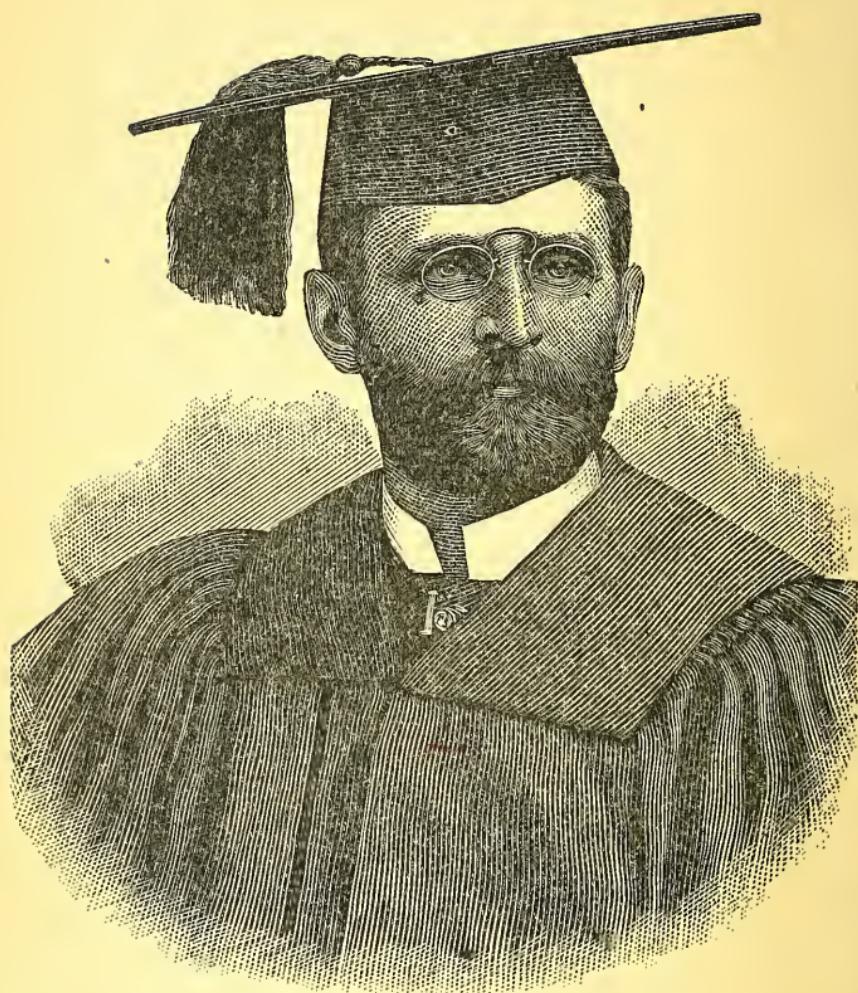
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REV. JOHN FRANKLIN CROWELL, A. M., PH. D., PRESIDENT OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
TRINITY PARK, DURHAM, N. C.

NORTH CAROLINA SERMONS.

VOL. III.

— 47

THIRTY SERMONS

BY

THIRTY

NORTH CAROLINA PREACHERS.

C

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RALEIGH:
EDITED BY REV. LEVI BRANSON, D. D.,
PUBLISHER, NO. 31, BRANSON HOUSE.
1893.

NOTES.

1. Some years ago I felt called to rescue some of our Sermon Literature from oblivion. I collected sixteen sermons, which composed Vol. I. I published and sold them promptly, mostly to subscribers. They are still doing good, especially to the masses who appreciate cheap, good books.
2. Afterwards I found Vol. II. called for. I collected twenty-three sermons, published, and sold them successfully. Very few of either volume can now be bought.
3. I here present Vol. III., or "Thirty Sermons from Thirty North Carolina Preachers." Most of the 2,000 copies printed are already ordered, and will soon be in the hands of the subscribers. The Sermons represent SIX different Evangelical Denominations.
4. This book of 300 pages, large type, has been prepared with a view especially to benefit three classes: (1) Aged people who never get to church; (2) afflicted people who, for the time being, are kept at home; (3) young enquirers. I am certain that all these, and many others, will be greatly benefited by reading these short gospel sermons.
5. In this way the Lord aids me to preach—to help sound the Gospel Call, and I rejoice in the good work.

LEVI BRANSON,

May 6, 1893.

EDITOR.

25-2.07

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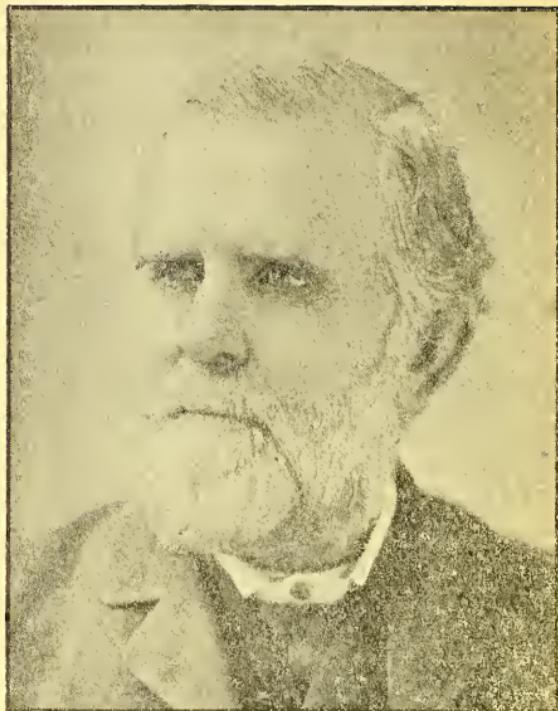
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WEAVERVILLE COLLEGE, N. C.

NORTH CAROLINA SERMONS.

VOL. III.

47

HEREDITARY TENDENCIES TO SIN.

By DR. E. L. PERKINS,

Of the North Carolina Local Ministers Conference.

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge."—EZEKIEL, xviii: 2.

This is the language of a proverb that had become common among the Jewish people. It was equal to saying, our fathers have tasted the sweets of sin and we have an hereditary appetite for the same enjoyment. It was probably given sometimes as an excuse for the excesses committed. As an excuse, it would be thrown in this shape: We are not so much to blame for our love of the evil habits we pursue, because it is the natural result of appetites inherited from our ancestors. The prophet Ezekiel, as directed by the Almighty, warned the people of this saying, and assured them that every man should be accountable for his own sins, and, as a consequence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It is every man's duty to fight evil, not to excuse its indulgence, and for the neglect of this duty men are condemned.

We propose to show that any indulgence in sin, not only embarrasses our own return to the path of rectitude, but throws innumerable stumbling-blocks

in the way of our children, so that while a man is damning himself he is helping largely to damn his posterity. This is a fearful thought, but true as it is alarming, as you will perceive by the reasons given.

We shall notice two ways in which parents entail ruin upon their children. First, by evil example; and second, by transmitting hereditary traits of an evil tendency.

1. By evil example, we mean those expressions or actions in the presence of children which lead to a discordant or vicious life. Hardly any trait in a child's character is more strongly marked than what a French writer, Alibert, calls "The instinct of imitation." Every child, as soon as it is capable of exercising its will over its own limbs, displays this instinct. The boy who gallops over the floor on his stick-horse, and the girl who puts her doll into a little cradle, show very plainly that the imitative instinct is there, and as they grow larger and acquire more power, they approach nearer to the real conduct of their exemplars. Many crimes and many virtuous actions owe their origin to this overwhelming desire to imitate what we see and hear. So completely is this the case that in many instances the act may be regarded as motiveless, outside of the motive to imitate. In some instances acts spring from nervous sympathy. A child enters a room and finds all within laughing or crying, and instantly begins to laugh or cry without knowing any cause of action. While there is little or no moral in such acts, it shows that the instinct of imitation is deeply embedded in our natures,

that it is irrepressible and will assert itself under all conditions of life. It is very clear that there is a potency in social environments that few have the power to resist. There is a constant tendency to drift or whirl with the current we are in, most especially if that current be broad and strong. It is well known that by successive generations imitating their parents and associates, national customs, usages and language are formed, and thus communities of men acquire that distinction and difference which so strongly characterizes one people from another.

There are persons in the world who have very little will-power, and at the same time have great nervous sympathy, with the desire to imitate strongly developed. With such persons the power of a dominant idea becomes almost irresistible. Surrounded by good examples, they will be foremost in good works; but place them under evil influences and they will hasten on in the path to ruin. Such persons will be always following in the direction which offers the least resistance. Children whose wills have been subject to the dictations of their parents and teachers, are generally plastic, and consequently subject to surrounding influences. They are like the dry sponge, ready to imbibe the first moisture that approaches it. Hence, we see the grave importance of securing for them the best examples in the outset of life.

As parental example is the first with which the child comes in contact, it is the first to turn the current of life in the direction of evil or good, and to

shape its future destiny. The child catches its first inspiration in a desire to imitate, and what it begins it repeats by habit. "Habit is the result of an act frequently repeated," and once a habit is formed it becomes a controlling force, in some natures, quite irresistible. The act is sometimes repeated, against the will, without any reason for it, simply because it is habit, either of body or mind. There is no resting place for evil habit once formed. Its tendency is to rush on, like the boulder loosened on the side of the mountain, accumulating momentum and increasing in velocity as it sweeps toward the plains below. The prophet recognized this force when he exclaimed, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. xiii : 23.

It is an accepted maxim "that those acts are most easily and well done which are oftenest done." This rule applies to the habits of the mind as well as of the muscles. Habit becomes "the kindest friend or the cruellest foe to human welfare," according to its tendencies. It is the privilege of all parents, by early training, to direct their children into happy methods of thought and action. But unfortunately, many parents are reckless of their example, either in language or action, and the children are led astray by their evil surroundings. "The parents eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," and when the Lord speaks to the children we hear him say, "As your fathers did so do ye."

This subject teaches us that we cannot be too

deeply impressed with the importance of placing pure examples before our children, and teaching them to shun evil habits as "the contagion of a deadly pestilence." We all know that by one course of conduct life is exalted, made happy and honorable, while by an opposite course life is debased, made miserable and thrown under a cloud of disgrace. To put the children in either of these courses is a work belonging to parents. Parental precept and example are the two sides of the great mould in which character is cast. If the moulds are rough the image will be blurred and misshapen; if smooth and polished, the image will reflect credit upon its workmanship. Let us never forget that in a vast majority of instances men and women are, in their characters, a reflection of parental influence, and whatever we would that our children should be, let us try to become that thing ourselves. This is the only safe rule either for time or eternity.

2. Secondly, we notice that parents entail ruin upon their children by transmitting an hereditary taint.

By hereditary taint we mean that physical, mental and moral corruption transmitted from parents to children, and which renders the children, thus corrupted, less capable of discharging the duties of life than those who have sound blood, sound intellects and proper impulses. This brings us into a field of reflection the most revolting and the most alarming we could be called to survey. We tremble as we approach, knowing that at every step the most pol-

luted scenes uncover themselves before us. It is a very common and true saying that "like begets like," and the scriptures recognize this truth in the declaration that "a good tree bringeth forth good fruit," while "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Any physiologist will tell you that parents affected with cancer, scrofula, erysipelas, pulmonary consumption, or any other blood taint, will transmit that taint to their children. This is a fact known and recognized throughout the medical world. It is just as true of disease as it is of the features of races and tribes of men and breeds of animals. Now, a child born into the world with an irritable nervous system, shattered by disease transmitted or lying latent, only wanting a favorable moment for development, cannot perform the duties of life with that satisfaction which belongs to those who are sound in every part. Some families of children die easy, that is, it takes but little sickness to kill them, and the physician often regrets the loss of his young patient, knowing that the disease ought to have been quite curable in one of sound blood. But people of hereditary taint intermarry, and the offspring shares a double portion of vitiated blood. With them, life is not a happy display of health and strength, but a season of weakness, and pain, and nervousness, and irresolution. Such children cannot battle with the troubles of life without feeling that their lot is one of peculiar hardship. It will be well if they have grace enough not to murmur against Providence.

Parents, by dissipation, lasciviousness and extra-

gant conduct, contract diseases that run like fire through the blood of their descendants, and malignant ulcers, ponderous abscesses, tormenting pains, nervous prostration and a thousand evils follow in the trail of one debauched life. A single night's debauch has often entailed innumerable evils upon the posterity of the debauchee and spread desolation through succeeding generations. No wonder that when the voice of heaven is heard on the subject it comes in words like these, "Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body;" "The seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned." Hence God, in His wisdom and goodness, has often seen fit to cut off whole families from the earth, and sometimes whole nations have shared the same fate. It was a mercy thus to end a blood that had passed beyond the pale of redemption.

But the worst feature of all, we have yet to approach. If the transmission of diseased blood was all the trouble there would be more ground for hope, but unfortunately appetites and passions are inherited. The peculiar tempers of parents are transmitted to their children with as much certainty as diseased blood. Drunken parents, as a general rule, have drunken children, while the sons of gluttony can point to their fathers as being the fountain of their inherited appetites. Parents of irritable tempers transmit these tempers with their blood, and then make them still more certain by their example. That peculiar condition of the brain that gives rise to intense passion is one of the things that seldom fails to repeat itself in posterity. Sometimes the better influence of one of

the parents may overcome the evil tendencies derived from the other, and a part or all the children for one generation may be saved from the evil; but it is sad to reflect upon the fact that the baleful influence of both parents often overwhelm the children, and carry them like a whirlwind across the burning plains of a physical, mental and moral degeneracy. Idiocy has its tendency to repeat itself in one family; apoplexy in another, epilepsy in another, and so of other diseases arising from impure blood. Sometimes hereditary diseases are known to leap over one generation, to break forth with renewed violence in the next. This is a well known fact, for which science has not been able to give a satisfactory reason. In like manner mental and moral defects, violent tempers and uncontrollable appetites and passions seem to suspend in one generation to reappear in the next. This thing has been a snare to thousands of good people who have intermarried where the evil was supposed to have been cured, but was only suspended. When too late the error has been detected. Few persons appear to be as wide-awake on this subject as the interests of the community demand.

A man's thoughts and emotions are the instruments that chisel out the monument of his character, and that character is good or bad according to the purity or impurity of his thoughts and emotions. As mental and physical peculiarities are transmitted from generation to generation, and as our modes of thought and impulse are governed by these peculiarities, it follows that character is hereditary. As char-

acter fixes our destiny, for time and eternity, it becomes us to watch with the deepest anxiety every tendency to change for better or worse. Does it follow, because character is hereditary, that it is unalterable? By no means. Man's will is given to him that he may work changes in himself, as well as in the objects around him. The rocks and trees must remain what they are, with all their peculiarities, because they have no will to order a change. They must abide the course of Nature, but man can choose and determine for himself, to be or not to be, so far as character is concerned. The man who has inherited a smooth disposition, and has been early trained by good examples, and brought into good habits, finds little difficulty in passing on up to a higher plane of Christian duty. But the man who has inherited an irritable temper, a passionate disposition and depraved appetite, finds himself hedged in with difficulties that will require an immense struggle to overcome before he can reach the planes of Christian manliness, and once he has reached that plane, he is beset with snares and temptations throughout the journey of life. He has to cultivate a will-power that the other has already inherited, just as the son of a poor man has to build a fortune while the heir of the rich has his fortune already in hand. But exercise gives strength, and he who wins a victory by great effort will be better qualified for the next assault.

We cannot excuse ourselves, then, by saying that our teeth are on edge because our fathers ate sour grapes. We may deplore the fact, but we have the

use of our wills to choose or refuse; it falls within the range of our duty to recover for ourselves that which our fathers have lost. The fortunes that have been lost by indolent parents have often been recovered by industrious children. Character-builders may do the same. The struggle may be long and arduous, but the reward will be satisfactory.

We cannot close our eyes upon the fact that inherited passions and appetites have been the greatest barriers in the way of advancing reformation. To gratify these passions and appetites, education has been neglected, the intellects of children have been dwarfed, and incorrigible ignorance has stood sentinel over the thoughts and emotions, to keep back the agencies of light and knowledge. Ignorance has for its relief-guard a host of the most bitter prejudices, and thus the entrance of better principles has been effectually kept at bay. Where ignorance abounds passion is stronger than reason, and under the sway of unbridled passions and unholy desires the soul is ever ready to be caught up in a whirlwind of excitement and lifted beyond the domains of virtuous reflections. To diminish crime, then, of every description, we see that the great remedy is to teach self-control. We cannot lay too much stress upon this point. Bring the emotions in subordination to the will, and the foundation is laid on which to build any kind of character you may choose to erect. Neglect that point, and all your labor is lost.

When we see the inebriate, with tear-bedimmed eyes, going to spend the last dime of a fortune for

which his father toiled, and against the remonstrances of all that are near and dear to him, we see an instance where the power of the will is submerged by appetites and impulses inherited or acquired, and where self-control has been sacrificed on the altar of sensual gratification. Our great teachers are not those who convey the greatest amount of information in a given time, but those who are most successful in giving lessons of self-restraint. We can heartily subscribe to the saying that "A low education which teaches self-control, is better than a high education which fails in this achievement."

Our propensities to sin, whether inherited or acquired, assume all the force of habit, and require an increasing vigilance and unremitting toil to conquer them. Let us learn not to excuse ourselves, but to fight manfully, knowing that he who fights the hardest battle wins the highest applause. Excuse yourselves as you may, and still there comes against you a projectile from the divine catapult: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Your personal responsibility to God can never be evaded. If your parents have thrown stumbling-blocks in your way you are required to remove them, and if your task is hard the crown of your reward is so much the brighter. He who gains the greatest number of victories has the greatest triumph, and the rewards of eternity are made up upon the principle that the Son of man shall deal to everyone "according to his works." Every victory you have won will fix another sparkling gem in the crown of your rejoicing.

HEAVENLY RECOGNITION.

By REV. H. T. DARNALL,

Pastor Presbyterian Church, Durham, N. C.

* * * “ now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”—I. CORINTHIANS, xiii: 12.

- It is a question of no little difficulty to determine what the difference shall be between our present bodily state where soul and body are united, and that in which we shall be out of the body, and we are dependent for its solution upon the Word of God. It would seem, however, first of all, that there is no warrant whatever for the materialistic idea that the soul is unable to feel or to act without bodily organs. The state of trance, prophetic vision, the apostle's being caught up to the third heaven and hearing unutterable things, would all seem to point in the opposite direction. Still, the question whether we shall know the loved ones who have gone before us when we pass into eternity is one that interests us all and must be considered in the light of Scripture, not so much by direct affirmation as by reasonable inference. We know they have not ceased to exist, and, if saved, are in heaven. But when we enter that many-mansioned habitation, shall we know them?

“ When the holy angels meet us,
As we go to join their band;
Shall we know the friends that greet us
In that glorious spirit-land?”

Millions have gone through the gateway of death, but none have returned to tell us of what is there, so that we cannot adduce the testimony of experience. Human philosophy cannot give us any certain light, its speculations teach us little or nothing. And yet Reason would point in favor of recognition, rather than against it. It is *reasonable* that those we have known and loved here, we shall know and love in heaven. It would be irrational to suppose that any such transformation shall take place at death as shall destroy the affections God has put into our hearts and has bidden us to cherish. It would be a dreary thought that human friendships are only for earth; that they end at death, and that we shall enter heaven, one by one, as strangers in a strange land, unremembered and unrecognized by those we have loved and who have loved us in this world; that the mother who has watched with tenderest love, in sickness and in health, the child that has gone before should be to that child in heaven as if she had never known it. It is cold, hard, repulsive. We know that love is right; God is love, and commands us to love one another. All the divine precepts unite in this. Love lasts forever. Friends in Christ here shall meet as friends there.

Again, the continuance of memory in after life is in the same direction. We shall not forget the experiences of our earth-life. We shall remember that we were sinners and were saved by grace. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus Abraham says, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy

good things." So, too, we know we must give account to God for all that we have done on earth. Shall we, then, remember everything else, and yet, in regard to the closest, sweetest ties of earth, that so largely influenced our thoughts, words and actions here, memory shall be a blank? Those who have loved and helped us, whom we have loved and helped, shall they be forgotten forever? And if memory lives on, and love lives on, can there fail to be reunion and recognition in the life beyond?

"If all be swept from memory, and no more
A recognition win,
Than if no breathing life had gone before—
Than if they had not been:

The tender things, the nameless ministries
That once made life so fair—
The sweet experience of a thousand things—
Could any angel share ?

Nay, let me hold the sweet conclusion fast,
That the pure memories given
To help our joy on earth, when earth is past,
Shall help our joy in heaven."

But to come to Scripture, when of any of God's ancient people it was said "He died and was gathered to his fathers," or "to his people," the statement cannot refer simply to the burial of the body. Abraham was buried far away from the resting-place of his fathers. Moses was "gathered to his fathers," and yet Moses was buried on Mount Nebo, "and no man knoweth of his sepulchre." Jacob "yielded up the ghost and was gathered to

his fathers"; yet he was not buried for forty days afterwards. The meaning evidently is that the departing man went to join his ancestors in the spirit world, and the thought is that of one's friends and kindred gathered and waiting to receive him. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," cries David on the death of his child; he plainly believed his child was yet alive, and when his own course was ended he would meet him, know him and love him as before. Recognition runs all through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Abraham knew the rich man, for he recalls his life to him. The rich man recognized Lazarus, and also recognized Abraham whom he had never known in the flesh. In the mount of transfiguration, also, Moses and Elijah appear as companions, although Moses was in heaven five hundred years before Elijah. Peter, James and John, under that heavenly influence, seem to have known who Moses and Elijah were. Our Lord once said, "Make to yourselves friends of (by means of) the mammon of unrighteousness" (a name for money), *i. e.*, make friends by doing good with your means, "that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations"—they whom you have befriended and helped will welcome you into those eternal habitations. But more than this: Heaven is a home, a place of "many mansions." It is our Father's house; we are his children; but can we conceive of a *home*, a *father* and *children*, and the members of the family not *know* each other? We have all felt the sadness of *loneliness*—shall heaven cut us

off from the tender intimacies of affection? Is it some cold, inhospitable land without welcome or greeting, as when some ship touches the shore and the poor immigrant comes off alone, knowing no one at the wharf, receiving no word or smile of recognition, and yet we know the dearest and best of earth are there? Is that all Jesus meant when He said, "Let not your heart be troubled?" Or is it not rather

" As one who travel-worn and weary—
Weary of wandering thro' many scenes—
At length returning homeward, sees afar off
The white cliffs of his father-land; and ere
The laboring ship touches its sacred soil
Leaps on the pier, while round him press
His children, kith and friends, who in a breath
Ask of his welfare, and with joyous tongues
Pour all their love into his thirsting ear."

" What is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? " says Paul to the Thessalonians, " are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ? " Did he not expect to meet and know then those he had loved and led as a pastor on earth ? Death does not destroy personality, the heavenly life cannot blot out the memories or influences of the earthly. The characters we build here will be perfected, but surely not destroyed there. Whatever is good and true and pure and lovely in us we shall keep forever. Life is but one; it begins here, it continues there—death is but a stepping-stone to the life beyond. Death came by sin, and the sundering of earthly ties is one, at least, of its consequences; but Jesus came to abolish death, to lift off the curse ; and

shall death be no more and yet its consequents continue? When we reach heaven we shall die no more, but shall we have to begin to know each other over again? Is this what Paul means when he says, "Then shall I know, even as also I am known"? "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face?" I cannot conceive of it so. I believe I shall clasp my mother's hand there again. I believe you will know at once and love the little darling you gave up to God, that you will be again by the side of your Christian husband to be parted no more, that your sainted wife is waiting for you on the other side, and that pastors will meet their dear flocks there and rejoice with them. Yes, I believe we shall all know each other there, and shall look into each other's faces and see the joy beaming there, and shall all break forth into glad eternal hallelujahs. And now what practical lessons may we find here: *First.* This hope should make our earthly lives holier and better. Friends are waiting for us in heaven; such a thought should lift us above the beggarly elements of the world, it should restrain us from sin. The benediction such a hope kindles in our breasts should give us a strong desire for holy things and an impulse to better living. *Second.* This truth should make us true and tender friends to each other in this life. Immortal affections should surely be sacred. If you thought you should never know or love the friends of earth, you would number them with temporal things and it would cramp and chill all earthly affections. But how deeply, how tenderly, we may love each other

here when we know the separations of life are but brief, and heaven shall view their renewal in an unending union. How gentle our words, how patient and forbearing shall our lives be, holding our friends in such light as this. *Third.* This truth appeals to the unconverted. They have sainted friends in heaven they want to meet, perhaps have promised to meet as they bade them farewell here, and yet they cannot meet them unless they turn from their sins unto God.

THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS.

BY REV. MARQUIS L. WOOD, D. D.,
Of the North Carolina Conference, (M. E. C., S.)

Am I in the place of God? Genesis 1:19.

After the death of their father Jacob, the brothers of Joseph thought that he would certainly requite them for the great wrong they had done him forty years before by selling him into slavery. They sent to him a messenger to remind him of his father's command to him to forgive his brothers their sin. They came and threw themselves at his feet, confessing the evil they did him, and offering to become his servants for life if he would forgive them. Joseph wept when they begged him for their lives, and said to them, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God?"

The doctrine of the text is, vengeance belongs to God, and, consequently, it is man's duty to forgive.

And perhaps there is no duty more important, and often more perplexing, than the duty of forgiveness. Hence it should be well understood. Our Saviour says, "It is impossible but that offences will come." It is impossible but that the interests of finite and sinful beings will sometimes conflict and occasion offences. And when the offences come, every sincere and honest person is anxious to know what to do. All such want to do right. Let us, then, try and bring to the study of this important subject the spirit of Christ; and may the Holy Spirit help us to rightly understand it.

The duty of forgiveness has two distinct phases, which we will consider separately: 1. Subjectively, as regards the offended person irrespective of the one giving the offence; 2. Objectively, as regards what is necessary on the part of both offended and offender to bring about a reconciliation.

We will take these up in the order stated, and consider them in the light of the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

I. *Subjectively, as regards the offended person irrespective of the one giving the offence, or doing the wrong.*

This, as is readily seen, has reference to the person who has been offended or wronged, regardless of the conduct of the person giving the offence or doing the wrong, regardless of his motive or of his animus. Sometimes it may not be possible to know at once the mind of the offending party. Then what is right, what is his duty, for the person who is improperly treated? Let us not forget that

we are not asking for human opinions, or human codes. We are studying this subject in the light of the teachings and life of Christ. He is *the truth*. God says, "Hear ye him." He is the only one who can speak authoritatively upon matters of Christain ethics. We are not inquiring what men, worldly men, think and say upon this subject.

The Holy Spirit says, through Paul, Rom. xii:19, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath (the wrath of God): for it is written, vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." (R. V.) Then vengeance does not belong to man. Man has no right to use it, or to exercise it. God holds that in his own hands. Hence it is unmistakably man's duty to refrain from vengeance, and under provocation he must divest his mind and his heart of all vindictive purposes and feelings. Our Saviour says, "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone." There is no condition mentioned in this statement. None was intended. *When ye pray, forgive, if ye have aught against any one.* There is no mistaking this language. And no amount of questioning or quibbling can weaken its force. It is an absolute requirement, an absolute duty. Our own forgiveness depends upon our forgiving, and that, too, in the manner here specified. "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Then the salvation of our souls depends upon our forgiving those who trespass against us. Our Saviour

has given us a model prayer. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven." In that prayer He put this petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," or, as it is frequently rendered, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgive us as we forgive. Let us analyze this petition. Suppose a man who has been offended, or imagines he has been offended, and does not from his heart forgive, but cherishes vindictive feelings and purposes, goes to God and prays this prayer. What does it mean? For what does he pray? He asks God to forgive as he forgives, and at the same time he is cherishing vindictive feelings! Then he is asking God to visit vengeance upon his soul! Terrible! "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

I read of a knight who had determined to go on an expedition of revenge and communicated the fact to his chaplain, who tried to dissuade him from going. He would not listen to his chaplain. "Well," said the chaplain, "let us pray first." They knelt together, and the man of God said to the knight, "repeat after me." They commenced, "Our Father who art in heaven;" but when they came to the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," the knight stopped. His chaplain wanted to know what he meant. The knight replied, "I cannot pray that prayer. What! I ask God to forgive me as I forgive, and I am going

on an expedition of revenge! I can't pray such a prayer as that. I dare not." The man of God told him he must pray it, and urged him till he did; but when he rose from his knees he could not go on his vindictive expedition. No man can truly pray "the Lord's prayer" and cherish revengeful feelings against anyone.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil." What does our Saviour mean by this statement? "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," is found in the Mosaic law. Did Jesus mean to annul and set it aside? By no means. He did not come "to destroy the law or the prophets." That was a part of the civil code, but the people had, by their teachings and practice, taken that law into their own hands, and all that Jesus intended was to restore it to its proper place in the civil procedure. He taught that all must be true to the laws of the land, and see that they are executed. "Ye have heard that it hath been said!" How much wrong interpretation there is of the plain teachings of the holy scriptures under the plea of having heard somebody say something different. How solemn and authoritative the words of the great Teacher: "But I say unto you: that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Dr. R. W. Dale says: "If this were meant to be taken literally, it would impose an extremely light duty. For in decent civilized society men very seldom smite us on the right cheek or the left, so that the duty of turning the other

would not come often; and if one happened to smite us on one cheek, to turn the other as an act of obedience to Christ would require very little effort. But never to feel personal resentment against those who recklessly misrepresent us, who slander us, who insult us; and even when duty requires us to take measures to resist or redress an injury, to be as free from the spirit of revenge as a judge on the bench when he sentences a thief to be imprisoned, or a murderer to be hung; to be righteously indignant at wrong-doing, but not to suffer the sense of the wrong done to ourselves to exaggerate the guilt of the wrong-doer, or to make us desire for our personal satisfaction that he should suffer for his offence—this is a much more difficult matter, and this is what Christ requires."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering," and we dare not substitute as a code of ethics human prejudices and human notions, or the spirit of unsanctified human nature, for the Divine teachings.

We now proceed to the second phase of our subject, namely :

Objectively, as regards what is necessary on the part of both offended and offender to effect a reconciliation.

This is conditioned, and the conditions are very clearly stated by our Saviour: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent forgive him." He specifies something for both parties to do. Neither has the right to brood over it, or to talk about it to others.

"Rebuke him." How? "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell his fault between thee and him alone." Go at once. Go alone. Go in the spirit of meekness, in the spirit of conciliation. Don't talk about it to others. That will simply make the matter worse. "If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." But suppose he will not hear, then what? "Take with thee one or two more," and talk the matter over in their presence, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Such a course will show an honest desire to settle the difficulty and keep it from troubling the community. "And if he shall neglect to hear them"—will not be persuaded by them to make the proper acknowledgments—"tell it to the church." But do not trouble the church with it till the above directions have been tried. "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." He has shown by his unrelenting that his act was premeditated and of evil intent, and is now not fit to associate with the noble and the good.

"And if he repent, forgive him." Repentance, then, is the condition upon which the offended must forgive and be reconciled. The offender has been properly approached, his wrong kindly pointed out, and he is ready to make the *amende honorable*. That is all that can be asked. "If he repent," "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." "Sorrow," grief because a wrong has been done, regrets the wrong, would recall it, undo

it if possible. "Godly sorrow worketh." Works to repair the wrong done, and to get right again. Works to salvation; works out of the difficulty; works to effect a reconciliation. No one is really sorry unless the sorrow moves to action; and the movement will be on the line of reparation and reconciliation. So we see that genuine repentance carries with it the doctrine and the duty of restitution. He that truly repents, works; works to put himself right with God, and right with his brother; works to repair the injury done to society and to the cause of Christ. If the trespass has been a fraud, he can restore that which has been obtained by the fraud; if it has been a slander, a defamation of character, he can correct that; if it has been a libel he can publish a retraction. In a word, he will do everything in his power to repair the wrong that has been done. Where there is no restitution there is no repentance, no sorrow for the trespass, no sorrow for the sin. An old Chinese woman embraced Christianity while I was in China and joined the church. She then went to her children, her grandchildren, her neighbors, and told them that she had taught them wrong; that she had found "the true doctrine," and she wanted now to undo the wrong that she had done and lead them in the right way. She repented and brought forth fruits corresponding thereto. Zaccheus said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to feed the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house."

"And if he repent, forgive him." *If he repent*, this is the condition upon which God forgives; and He requires the same between man and man. *Forgive him*, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." So our own personal salvation depends upon our forgiving one another. "Put on, therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving each other; if any man have a complaint against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Even as God forgives. He says, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Forgives and forgets.

The necessity and the nature of forgiveness are illustrated by the parable of the unmerciful servant. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." One was brought that owed him ten thousand talents. He had nothing with which to pay. "His lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." The servant begged for time, and he would pay all. Then his lord had compassion on him, and forgave him the debt. That servant went out and found a fellow-servant that owed him an hundred pence. He seized him by the throat, saying as he did so, "Pay me that thou owest." He also begged for time, and would pay all he owed him. But no;

his fellow-servant put him in prison "till he should pay the debt." Now his lord had the hard-hearted servant called, and said to him, "O, thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredest me, shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Did not justice, to say nothing of mercy, require that he should? So "his lord delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due him." So we see that the forgiven debt comes back, simply because that servant would not forgive his fellow-servant. Now let us see the application that Jesus makes of this: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Language cannot be plainer. There can be no mistaking it. Our Lord says positively that there is no forgiveness on the part of our heavenly Father unless we forgive also. And if there is no forgiveness, there is no salvation. So that it is a most fearful thing to cherish animosity, ill will, an unforgiving spirit.

Forgiveness is beautifully and forcibly exemplified in the life of Joseph. His brothers hated him, envied him, conspired to take his life; cast him into an empty pit to perish, but afterwards took him out and sold him into slavery. Years after, through a most wonderful providence, they are before him, but they knew him not. He was governor over Egypt, and had it in his power to have retaliated, and no one would have called him to an account for it. But no. He manages to have Benjamin brought to him.

Then makes himself known to them. Sends for his father, and provides for them all. After Jacob's death, and seeing that the authority of their father was gone, his brothers thought that Joseph would get satisfaction. They surrender themselves up to him, expecting death or slavery. Joseph replies, "Am I in the place of God?" As if he had said, "Do you suppose I am so wicked, so base, so mean, as to try to invade the prerogatives of God? Vengeance belongs to Him, not to me." The meaning of his words in the text is, "I forgive you all the evil you thought to do me." He forgave them fully from his heart. "And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them,"—spake to their hearts. Noble man! It is true dignity to forgive. It is ennobling. It is Godlike. It makes a man like God. It is the glory of God to forgive.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SAFETY.

By SHOCKLEY D. ADAMS,

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"Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."—MATTHEW xxvi: 41.

I do not think we can fully understand, or properly appreciate, this language of our Lord unless we regard it as a note of warning, sounding the alarm, telling of approaching danger, and putting us on our guard; that we may be fortified in the day of attack. And this warning comes from Gethsemane;

it sounds out from the depths of the agony in the garden. It first fell on the ears of the sleepy disciples, and the echo has ever since been falling on the ear of a drowsy church. It was spoken not only to the disciples, but to the "elect among the elect"—the three chosen to be with the Lord and witness a scene not surpassed in the annals of His suffering. It is intended at once, and for all time, to put believers on their guard; it indicates danger imminent and threatening, and to avoid it there must be prudent forethought, much watchfulness and prayer.

The first lesson we learn from the text is this: *The pardon of past sins will not avail unless we are preserved from sin in the future.*

Sin depresses and degrades; pardon elevates and gives an honorable relation to the law and its author; but elevation and honor do not remove our weakness, or so change our constitutional nature as to leave us without any affinity for sin, or any inclination to wrong-doing. With pardon for past sins we may quietly sleep in the very arms of danger and of death.

Our only safety after pardon is in being preserved from temptation and sin; and to be thus preserved, our Lord says we must not be drowsy and indifferent, but appreciating our danger we should "watch and pray."

The text presents the danger against which we are to guard—*Temptation.*

The word tempt, or temptation, has two distinct meanings in the Bible. It is sometimes used in that sense which signifies *to test, to try, to prove.*

It is used in this sense when it is said: "And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, behold, here I am. And he said take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Here God did tempt Abraham, not to know his temper or disposition, but to furnish an opportunity for the exercise of the Christian graces, his faith in God, his love for Him, the extent to which his obedience would go; and placed him where it became his privilege to build a monument to his memory more enduring than any ever erected to human greatness. And in this, the severest of all trials, God put great honor on him, so that he stands before the world to-day as the acknowledged "friend of God."

But it has another, and, to us, a very important meaning. That is, *to incite or entice to the commission of evil.*

In this sense it is an inducement to evil, which becomes the occasion of sin. It is a solicitation which operates as a motive or consideration, the tendency of which is to inflame the passions, prejudice the mind, or in some way superinduce a desire to commit an unlawful and sinful act. It is used in this sense when it is said: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away

of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In this sense God does not tempt, nor can He be tempted. This form of temptation comes as an allurement from the finite evil, and not from the holy infinite God. The purpose of the temptation is not to develop and strengthen Christian character, but to lead to compliance with its demands. To produce this disastrous result, there must be within us something that answers to the call from without, and inward affinity for an outward evil. The temptation comes breathing a soft, luxurious air, chimes in with our moral nature, appeals to pride, or prejudice, or passion, and offers such inducements as to lead to submission.

The temptation is sometimes sudden, and very violent. It comes in an unexpected hour, from an unexpected source, and with such violence as may well produce alarm. But little time for thought, to adjust the feelings, to exercise sound judgment, to pray, to get ready for the attack ; it is already on, with all its fearful force, and must be resisted, or the tempted must stagger and fall. Safety in such a conflict calls for great prudence and care.

Most generally the temptation is *seductive*.

The tempter approaches slowly, cautiously and with great seductive tact, and, covering his evil purpose, he gives the strongest assurance of entire safety, and affirms there is not, nor can there be, the least possible danger in dallying with this Delilah. And selecting the temptation from things the most beau-

tiful and attractive though most poisonous, and baptising it with a christian name, he proclaims it is the very embodiment of innocence, the life of enjoyment; and says that it is actually incorporated in the church of this age as a part of its religion.

And there are so many church members who are ready to listen and to yield, protesting there is no danger until harm's work is done, and the worst results are realized. The process by which this is effected is a study. Its work is not done at one bound, not always in an hour, or a day. Time, thought, and skillful management are necessary. A proper subject, the place and surroundings must all be considered. Here is about the process: An evil thought entertained soon develops into strong imagination, producing a pleasurable sensation, which acts on the will as a motive power, gaining its consent; and then the work is done.

The soul that once soared on high and held communion with the invisible and eternal, now with broken wing flutters in the dust unable to arise and claim kinship with the skies. Overcome of evil, how has the mighty fallen! But here is another lesson: *We are overcome, not by the power of temptation to force the will, but by our own weakness in yielding.*

Our danger is in our weakness; that is the point to be guarded. We are not to destroy the enemy; that is not our work. We are to build character, and so fortify ourselves that we may stand any attack that may be made. If we have truth and Christ for

us, there may be such an impartation of strength as to preserve us amid any onslaught of the enemy. Martin Luther said: "Once the Devil came to me and said, 'Martin Luther, you are a great sinner, and will be damned.' 'Stop, stop,' said Luther, 'one thing at a time. I am a great sinner, that is true, though you have no right to tell me of it. I confess it. What next?—therefore you will be damned. It is true I am a great sinner, but it is written Jesus Christ came to save sinners, therefore I shall be saved. So I cut the Devil off with his own word, and he went away mouthing because he could not cast me down by calling me a sinner.'"

Luther was too strong for the Devil in that contest, and so may we be in every trial of our strength if we live in Christ and draw supplies from Him. He that is for us is greater than all that can be against us. To do that, we must *watch and pray*.

These are the means to be used for our protection and safety. Their importance is clearly indicated in the text. They are closely allied; inseparably connected. Watchfulness will promote prayer; prayer will increase watchfulness. While we watch we pray, and while we pray we watch. Both must be utilized—woven into the very texture of our spiritual life.

Watch. Here it is standing in the front, calling loudly, and wooing us on. To watch is to give attention, to be vigilant, to guard with care. Watch and wake are different forms of the same word, they carry the same root idea; they look to the same end. To

watch, then, we must be awake, wide awake and so continue, and not, like the chosen disciples, sleep in the garden and in sight of the cross. But it means more than that: It means that all our watchful powers should be in full exercise, guarding against the approach of evil—anything that may lead to temptation. We must be so wide awake to our interest and safety as to see approaching danger in the distance, and keep out of its way.

“Argus” is fabled to have “had a hundred eyes, only two of which slept at once. But when Mercury came and played the Pandean pipes, and made music of a new and touching kind, and told enchanting tales until a late hour of the night, he saw the hundred eyes all closed at once, and the head leaning on his breast. Then Mercury drew his sword and at one blow severed the head from the body, and it went tumbling down the cliffs beneath. The hundred eyes were nothing worth when they were not used for the purpose for which they were given.”

Argus slept and lost his head, and with it all was gone. It is not so much the powers we may possess as those wisely used that saves from defeat and failure. Watchfulness is a power for good. It puts us on our guard, shows us approaching danger, places us in a position for defence, but does not give the strength necessary to our safety. Nor is that strength ours—within us. It is foreign, divine, God-given, and is received for the asking. It is inseparably connected with prayer. Hence the command of the Master, “Watch and pray.”

Pray. Our Lord's condescending proposition is: "Ask and ye shall receive." "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray believe that you receive them, and ye shall have them."

A believer's watchfulness must be like the sentinel on the outer post, who when he sees the enemy's forces advancing does not go out to meet them single-handed and alone, but reports to headquarters, that the commanding general being advised may direct the defence and rout the enemy. So the Christian watching and waiting, when he sees the enemy approaching goes to the Lord in prayer, and He prepares him for the day of battle,

An essential element of prayer is *earnestness*.

The soul must be in it, every sentence must be an expression of want, and tell its tale of helplessness casting itself on power; of infirmity leaning on strength, and of misery wooing bliss.

Hannah Moore said: "Prayer is the application of want to Him who only can relieve it; it is the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty, the prostration of humanity, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness; not a definition of helplessness, but the feeling of it; not figures of speech, but compunction of soul. It is the Lord save us or we perish of drowning Peter; the voice of faith in the ear of mercy."

But in the text our Lord teaches *secret personal prayer*.

This is indicated by the phraseology of the text

and his example in the garden. He was in the garden with His disciples and said to them, "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." In another place, he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me." He went a little further—was then alone with the Father, in the depths of his agony, keenly pierced, almost exhausted, and in secret he prayed, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Secret prayer is the life of the soul, and he who prays much lives much with God, loves much, endures much, enjoys much and has great peace. "And when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

For success in prayer, preparation is necessary.

A proper place. "Enter into thy closet." Yes, that is the place, "thy closet." Everyone should have a closet for secret prayer. Enter into the quiet private place, where Christ meets the devout soul and gives the overflowing fullness. Have you a closet, and have you entered into it?

It is thy closet. You have absolute control of the place now. Let me emphasize, "*Thy closet.*" Yours and yours alone. "*Shut thy door.*" Ah, there it is again—"Thy door." It must be the door of thy heart—shut it; shut out the world, its business, its distracting cares, its multiplicity of annoyances; shut

out wife and children, everybody and everything. No intrusion there. That is a sacred place. There you go to meet the living Christ. Glorious thought! Blood-bought privilege—in the closet with the world's Redeemer! Pray to thy Father which is in secret; unbosom thyself now; no reserve—let all come, the worst, the best, all, for He knows all, and has promised to supply all your wants.

THERE is safety; in the closet, reaching out after Christ, until He is realized in His personal presence, and the soul is so absorbed in Him as to utilize the wealth of His resources in guarding against the power of temptation. There we may securely rest forever.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

By Rev. W. D. MORTON, D. D.,

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"For our conversation is in heaven."—PHILIPPIANS iii: 20.

"The heavenly citizenship." Though dispersed among the nations and kingdoms of this world, Christ Jesus has a peculiar people. By His Holy Spirit He has called them out from the world, and begotten in their souls an allegiance to Him which rises superior to every other. Jesus rules over a multitude of willing subjects, who fully yield Him the love and devotion of their grateful hearts. Christ has erected His kingdom upon earth; but this world of sin is not its permanent abode. Its subjects are

for a little while left in the world, yet they are "not of the world;" and in His Father's house of many mansions, the Saviour has gone to prepare for His people a home where there shall be no more sin and "no more curse." The redemption, calling and destiny of the believer are the highest incentives to holiness. When, therefore, the worldliness and vice of certain spurious members of the Philippian church began to threaten the purity and life of the flock, Paul solemnly warned the church against these enemies of the Cross of Christ, who, gross, godless and sensual, delighted in earthly things. In contrast with these hypocrites, Paul declared, of the body of true believers, "For our conversation is in heaven." The literal meaning of the word rendered "conversation" is *citizenship*, and is originally significant of the privileges and protection secured to the citizens of Rome by the imperial government. Only a favored class in the Roman Empire were possessed of these rights of citizenship. More than once Paul had realized the privileges he possessed as a Roman citizen. When he was seized by the frenzied mob of Jews at the Temple and rudely dragged from its sacred precincts a cruel scourging awaited him, as the captain of the Roman garrison commanded him to be examined under the lash; but even as the executioner prepared the knotted ends for the bloody punishment, the Apostle paralyzed his arm by the question with which he pressed his superior: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?" Acts xxii: 25. When Paul insisted

upon his rank, the captain replied, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom;" when the Apostle answered, "But I was free born." Verse 28.

Then you will remember how a discovery of Paul's rank extorted from the magistrates at Philippi his release, as well as an apology, when they had inflicted scourging and imprisonment upon him and Silas, ignorant that Paul was a Roman citizen. When the Apostle wrote these words to the church at Philippi, we may well suppose that memories of that deliverance freshened in his mind. Paul was a citizen of Rome when the Empire was in its pride. The iron grasp of its hand was felt alike on the banks of the Euphrates on the east, and the Pillars of Hercules in the west, and within a radius of more than five hundred leagues from her capital the Eagles of Rome protected her citizens in their rights. But far grander and more powerful is the kingdom whose glories filled the Apostle's soul when he wrote those words. He then thought of citizenship in the great commonwealth of the "King of Kings"; of an inheritance in that kingdom where the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

1. Then, we see, Christ Jesus has a kingdom. Before his incarnation Gabriel revealed it to Mary. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i: 32, 33. The kingdom of our Lord is extensive and eternal; it is composed of

the citizens whom his Holy Spirit calls out of the world, and their names are all registered upon the page of the Lamb's book of life. Jesus said to the seventy disciples, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke x:20. This divine register contains the names of souls of all ages and nations who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. From the faithful young Abel who first passed through the deep waters into the eternal joys of the kingdom, on down the ages to the last expectant soul who as I speak has accepted Christ as his King.

2. But let us examine the privileges and mark the obligations of this heavenly citizenship: (1) While the kingdom of the Lord is eternally prepared for the blessed objects of God's grace, the first comforting effect of his citizenship revealed to the consciousness of the believer is a sense of God's love in the pardon of sin. This is a privilege to the heavenly citizen even here upon earth of which David spoke: "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. xxxii:1, 2. In its natural sinful state the human heart is utterly opposed to the divine government and service. The carnal mind is enmity against God. The impenitent soul, obstinate in sin, not only rejects but despises the claims and privileges of Christ's kingdom. The Holy Spirit finds the guilty soul blindly following this course of ingratitude and rebellion. He convinces the sinner

of the guilt of his rebellious life and exhibits the love and tenderness of God in Christ Jesus. He is thus led to repentance, and as he exercises faith in Christ and rests upon Him for pardon, the atoning work of Christ is reckoned to him as a complete satisfaction for the claims of divine justice, and his sins are covered up—remembered against him no more forever. “He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us, He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins in the depths of the sea.” Micah vii : 19. (2) Beyond this, the citizens of Christ’s kingdom are cleansed from the pollution and delivered from the power of sin. Mere pardon does not remove moral depravity. Pardon relates to the guilt of the sinner as meriting punishment, but cannot remove moral pollution. Pardon relieves the offender from fear of punishment, but does not remove the stains and pollution of his soul; and did the work of redemption go no further, an insuperable difficulty in the way of the sinner’s peace, purity and happiness would still remain. But the believer is not only *justified*, he is *sanctified*. He is cleansed from the taint of sin. In His sanctifying power the Holy Spirit continues His work in the heart of the believer, and “he is enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.” When called into the tearless land of eternal peace, this work is complete. Then when the citizens of Christ’s kingdom are ushered into the presence of the King, they will not go cowering and blushing as a band of timorous pardoned criminals; they will not only be justified,

but sanctified; not only pardoned, but purified, and stand spotless peers of the purest angel to join in the grateful acclaim; "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (3) But the disciples of Jesus are not only fellow-citizens and saints of the household of God, *but they are God's children*. Christ left His heavenly home not only to seek out and win back that which was lost, but to receive them into his family. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii:16, 17. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of *children* by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph. i:5. "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." John i:1, 2. The names of Christ's children are all very familiar and very dear to Him. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand, thy walls are continually before me." Isa. xlix:16. If the citizens of a powerful nation can find protection in a foreign land under the flag of their country or its official representative, how much more may the Lord's pilgrims and strangers on this earth, whose citizenship is in heaven, realize their security and peace under the sheltering arm of their omnipotent Father.

3. If these, then, are the privileges of the heavenly citizenship, what are the duties thereby involved? If eternally chosen of God, if redeemed and justified by our Lord, if adopted into His family and sancti-

fied by His Holy Spirit, what high and sacred obligations do we owe our Great King! In all of our words and actions we should acknowledge God as our Father. If children of the kingdom we must confess our Lord. Christ passed by and saw us in our rags and wretchedness; He has adopted us into the family of God, and this, too, at the cost of His own precious blood. We must, then, delight to avow His name and to serve Him with all our hearts. Then, too, if in God's household, and in truth His children, we must wear the colors of our Lord. We are His soldiers, and we must not parley or compromise with God's enemies. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." James iv: 4. Then, if children of the kingdom, this world is not our home; we are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. We should, in every daily duty, and in our transactions with men, keep this thought before us; it will cheapen the value of earthly and enhance the importance of heavenly things. Let us, then, use this world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of this world passeth away. This principle should dictate our tenure and use of all earthly goods with which God has entrusted us. We are Christ's stewards. The title to our wealth is all in him. The riches of His glorious kingdom are reserved for us. Then, instead of being engrossed with the pleasures and absorbed by the cares of this world, let us bear in mind that they are the uncertain temporalities incidental to our pilgrimage from this alien world to our heavenly home. How much

more serene the lives of God's children, how much less painful the parting from this world, did they ever hold it at its true cheap rate! It may be like the palace coach as, garnished with bright tinsel and decorated with showy paintings, it flashes back from its glittering mirrors the stranger faces that walk its passages; it may attract with spongy carpets and soft cushions as it smoothly glides over its track of steel, but, Christian brethren, it is not *home!* When we forget the emptiness and transient character of this world, when we cease to regard it as a tabernacle and esteem it as our *home*, our abiding place, then the hopes of heaven grow dim and the joys of our Father's kingdom become faint. Thoughts such as these doubtless dictated the reply said to have been made by Samuel Johnson to David Garrick, who, having followed him over the enchanting grounds and through the magnificent halls and stately chambers of his palatial house, said to the great actor, "Ah! David, these are the things that make it so hard for a man to die."

Let us, then, beware of forgetting that our true abiding place and our glorious citizenship is not here. Let us feel that this place is but a place of preparation for a better; that it but affords the time and opportunities God grants for seeking a heavenly home. Then we will from here, as a temporary place of sojourn, look for our Saviour from sin and from death, who shall "change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

STONING JESUS.

By Rev. JONATHAN SANFORD, D. D.,
Of the North Carolina Conference (M. E. C., S.).

"Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?"—JOHN x : 32.

Jesus of Nazareth has just finished one of his most beautiful sermons, in which he declares and illustrates his mission on earth by the parable of the Good Shepherd. For simplicity, pathos, and adaptation to his audience, it has no rival among the pictorial discourses to instruct the people in the way of salvation. The inimitable artist is at his best and he makes a supreme effort to break down the prejudice of the Jews and win them to his cause. They hated him without a cause, refused to investigate his claims, and, in their blindness, ascribed his divine works and acts to the inspiration of the Devil. We fail to see anything mysterious or offensive in the parable. It is especially adapted to their wants. The Good Shepherd was no new thing to them. They proudly claimed to be the descendants of the shepherd kings and prophets; some of whom they rightly estimated as the most distinguished and best of men. Moses and David were faithful shepherds, who led their flocks to the green pastures and sparkling brooks before God called them to the higher and more responsible vocation of leading men to the river of life. The royal Psalmist in his day recognized his subordinate position, and with his prophetic eye on

the Chief Shepherd to come, set redeeming grace to music, when, in the spirit of inspiration, his skillful fingers touched the harp strings and he sang, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." David's Lord was in their presence and they knew Him not. To them had been committed the prophecies pointing to His birth, the works He was to do with mathematical precision, but when He presents His credentials, and invites them to investigate His claims, they refuse to believe Him. To them He is a deceiver, a disturbing, dangerous element in the church, that must be suppressed. His appeals are simple and fair: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. If I do, believe me for the very works sake." "Search the Scriptures and see, they testify of me." Compare them with my works—"The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." These works bear witness that I am the Son of God. But no matter what he did or said, they demanded additional evidence. "Show us a sign," was uttered in the presence of the most astonishing miracles, the reality of which they did not attempt to deny, they could not, and their force must be broken by other methods. Just now they are outraged because Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man on the Sabbath. It is a difficult case. He was born blind, and they are confronted by the stubborn testimony of the man himself that his benefactor was called Jesus. The miracle has made a profound impression, and imme-

diate action is necessary or many will believe on Him. The parents are called, who cannot but affirm "He is our son and was born blind. This we know, we know that his eyes have been opened, by whom or by what means, we know not. He is of age and can speak for himself." When the man is called, the case becomes more difficult. Neither the Sabbath question, nor the fear of expulsion from the synagogue, the weapons at command, were sufficiently formidable to suppress the testimony of the grateful man whose dead eye-balls had felt the healing touch of the life-giving fingers. To the bitter falsehood, "We know this man is a sinner," he answered with emphasis, "Whether he is a sinner or no, I know not; but one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." This increased their enmity, and when afterwards they found him kneeling at the feet of Jesus, in the very act of worship and confession of faith that He was the Son of God, they were enraged, and expressed their hatred by casting him out of the synagogue. Jesus knew they were watching Him with murderous intentions, ready to stone Him to death if He committed Himself by a direct answer to the question, "Art Thou the Son of God?" His love knew no bounds. He came to save His enemies, and impelled by His divinae solicitude to save, He makes one more effort to open their spiritual eyes to see their fatal mistake. In the most solemn manner He compares Himself to the Good Shepherd; the Jews to the sheep; and with a skill that no human artist can imitate. The

picture of the true and faithful shepherd, his duties, his love for the flock, the sacrifice he makes, are the subjects from which the heavenly artist draws the series which compose the wonderful panorama—the sheep-fold, the flock, the shepherd leading them to green pastures and sparkling brooks, and giving his life, if necessary, if the wolf comes to kill. His comment is simple and touching. “I am like the good shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep.”

The Result. The sermon, so full of love and earnest solicitude for the salvation of men, ended in confusion with a division of sentiment.

Many said, “He hath a devil and is mad,” others said, “These are not the words of him who hath a devil;” while someone, impressed by the miracle which introduced the wonderful discourse, cried out, “Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” This pertinent question the enemies of Christ and Christianity find a difficult one to answer.

Weary and disappointed, Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon’s porch, where he was soon surrounded by the Jews.

The Crisis. The plot is growing intensely impressive, and seemingly the Good Shepherd must surrender to the wolves. They are evidently hungry for blood. They attempt to appear in sheep’s clothing, but cannot hide from omniscience the angry glitter of the wolf’s eye. “How long dost thou make us to doubt?” “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,” are the false words with which they hope to entangle Him. He knew their deep and wicked meaning,

the object they had in view; but with a few words of reproof and instruction He gave them what they wanted compressed in five words, "I AND FATHER ARE ONE."

This is plain enough, and in a moment the wolves are unmasked. They take up stones to stone Him. For what? What has He done or said to provoke them to madness? Ye astonished and insulted heavens; and thou, O earth, if thou wilt, answer, what has Jesus done, that He should be stoned to death? Who is mad now? As we watch the hypocrites unmasked, the eyes flashing with rage, the nostrils distended, the lips compressed, the scowl of the thunder-cloud on their brows, the mad muscles quivering to begin the battle; we ask, in the light of common sense, as well as in the presence of the innocent and unmoved Jesus of Nazareth, "Who is it that hath a devil?" The battle is on, and if only a man, deceiver or deceived, he must show some signs of human infirmity. He does not. He is neither intimidated or revengeful. He shows no signs of weakness. Calm and immovable as the everlasting hills, which, by His own assertion, are the objective expressions of His wisdom and creative skill, He confronts the mob and continues to give them the words of eternal life.

"Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?"

Fall into Line. Ye despisers and haters of Christ and of his church, fall into line and let us begin the crusade. Bring your weapons if you wish. The

battle is on, and you can choose your own methods in rejecting Jesus and the offer of salvation. Stones, fire and sword can still be secured ; or if too cowardly or indifferent to use them, you can join the multitude to mock and bear false witness. Any way ; "come and see." Christ and Christianity invites investigation. His works were not done in a corner, and the church which He established is like the city on the hill that cannot be hidden.

The manner in which men in all ages have rejected Jesus may be expressed by two words, *hate* and *despise*. The words, sometimes used interchangeably by careless writers and speakers, are not synonymous. The first means to dislike greatly, with the desire more or less intense to injure the person. It seeks to express itself in abuse, slander, or with weapons to hurt or kill. The attitude of the Jews to Christ is a forcible illustration. They hated Him with murderous intentions, and dogged his footsteps to find the semblance of an excuse to injure Him or put Him to death. To them He was an enemy that must be hushed or removed. In their blindness they saw nothing good in Him. After heaping all manner of indignities on His person and character, they nailed Him to the cross. After His resurrection and ascension, the fires of hatred burned on, and were transferred to His disciples. Saul of Tarsus led the way, and his crusade against the Christians, before his conversion, forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin, and is recorded as an imperishable monument to warn us that "there is a way that seemeth

right unto man;" a way which, if pursued, leads to death. He never forgave himself, and was honest enough to leave the melancholy confession, "I was exceeding mad, and persecuted the church unto death." He hated the Nazarine; hated his disciples, and directed all his energies to strangle the church in its infancy. After his conversion he suffered in return. The same spirit that impelled him, before the scales fell from his eyes, to persecute Jesus in His members, followed him unto death. Because he preached Jesus and the resurrection, the Jews "went about to kill him." Jesus excepted, he was the most intensely hated man in the world. Bonds, stripes, stones, imprisonment, awaited him until his tumultuous life ended on the block, from which the storm-beaten hero, bearing the scars of a thousand battles, took his departure to the home where the Christian soldier rests after the conflicts are past.

The spirit of persecution is not dead. The foul and blood-stained demon has learned to change his methods and weapons of warfare, but the inevitable conflict continues, and will as long as faithful preachers do their duty, and men and women reprove the ungodly by living pure lives. "Cain hated his brother because his own deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." Thousands in all ages, inspired by the same wicked spirit and for the same cause, have befouled the earth with slander and stained it with blood to the present day. Men and women are still hated and persecuted for righteousness sake. Clubs, stones and other deadly weapons

are out of date, not because there is no disposition to use them, but because public sentiment would be outraged, and jails and penitentiaries are not pleasant places. The wicked and cunning spirit changes its color to suit the conditions of society.

The whiskey ring, the great Diana of America and elsewhere, would stone Paul, or Jesus, to-day if the majesty of the civil law would defend them in the deed as it does in the odious traffic that sends millions of men to death and hell, and their posterity to beggary, the poor-houses, jails and the penitentiaries. They hate the church, its ministers especially, and carry a handy weapon in the tongue which, inflamed by hatred, is ever ready to express the attitude of the heart in abuse or slander.

Despise. This is a very common method in stoning Jesus and His church. His wonderful life, the church He came to establish, are too little and insignificant to notice. The offer of salvation through Christ is treated with scorn and contempt. This class is numerous. They see nothing in the church to excite love or hatred. It is beneath their attention. Saul hated, but confessed by his crusade against the church that there was no room for indifference. Pilate, though an ambitious heathen, was strongly impressed that Jesus was neither contemptible nor guilty, and against the protest of the Jews wrote on the cross: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." To his credit, he did not despise Jesus. Herod did. To him, Jesus of Nazareth was a poor, contemptible pretender, to be laughed at for His folly.

He had no respect for His person, claims or feelings, but demanded the exercise of His skill in performing tricks to gratify his curiosity. To all his questions, Jesus, who, under all circumstances heretofore, was ready to answer politely, and instruct even His enemies, answered not a word. The contempt was mutual, and Herod, with his men of war, set Him at naught, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and treated His person, claims and trial with supercilious scorn. The Word of God gives the alarm and warns us that all who despise Him shall be lightly esteemed. They who despise His law and the riches of His grace, are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath and of the righteous judgment to come. Then He will despise in return; laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. "Fools despise wisdom," and must reap the rewards of their folly when it is too late. It is safe to assume that thousands who had every opportunity to witness the miracles, study the spotless life and investigate the claim of the Son of God, were not impressed beyond a passing curiosity that vanished when the novelty ceased to attract.

Anyway, the impressions could not have been deep, for he made very few disciples. Despisers are numerous and common in our day. It is a melancholy fact that thousands who throng the streets of our towns and cities, where churches are convenient, and faithful men called of God to preach the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, despise the services of the church. The ring of the

church bell that calls the people to the temple of God, where, with prayerful attention they may learn the way that leads from hell to heaven, makes no more impression on them than the rattle of the cart-wheels on the pavement, or the shriek of the engine that indicates the arrival of the mail train. New and costly churches are erected, new preachers, new methods employed to attract the ungodly and win their souls; and for a season the sanctuary is filled, and the prospect encouraging, but the sensation soon passes away like the morning dew kissed by the sun-beams.

The despisers are by no means confined to the cities. Men are alike everywhere. Within walking distance of the average country church, men, women and children are found desecrating the Sabbath while the weary, faithful preacher delivers his message. The prayer and class-meetings, especially are treated with indifference, and the Sunday-school can hardly command half the children in the community.

Jesus, by parable, illustrates the manner in which this class rejects the offer of salvation. The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who sent his servants to invite his neighbors and subjects to the marriage of his son, "and they would not come." Others were sent, with instructions to say: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." "But they made light of it and went their ways." How much like the present. The King of Heaven sends His servants among all conditions of men,

to rich and poor, to ignorant and cultured, to the crowded cities and into the highways and hedges, to proclaim the good tidings: "Come, for all things are now ready." The way is open, the feast is free, and you are welcome. More, if you stay, you must perish. To come means pardon, salvation, heaven ; to treat with contempt means eternal death.

Christ the Son, by His one oblation on the cross, is the propitiation for our sins, the sin of the whole world, and God and the sinner have the right-of-way to meet at the cross on terms of reconciliation and eternal friendship. Come, ye sinners condemned by the law you have broken ; "Come, for all things are now ready,"

"*But they made light of it.*" The modern evangelist has tried his sensational methods, not in the hedges among the poor, but in the cities where crowds can be gathered who will pay him for creating an enthusiastic uproar, which, like the waves driven by the wild winds, return to their normal condition when the storm is over. Preachers are caught in the whirl and cry "God speed," until the inevitable reaction, when they discover that the best rendered services are despised. The last state is worse than the first. Heaven help us when hand-shaking in the spirit of enthusiasm only is substituted for the new birth

The Bible. This wonderful book is a revelation of Jesus Christ and His relation to our world as creator and redeemer. From Genesis to Revelation the Holy Scriptures testify of Him. To reject the Bible, as a whole or in part, means stoning Jesus.

There is no evasion, It contains His word, records His works, and reveals His person. In its subject matter it is too high intellectually to have originated in the minds of men ; and certainly too good morally to have been enterprised by wicked men.

The first scene in the wonderful drama, shows Him in the exercise of His creative power; suns and systems leaping from the womb of eternity to take their places in eternal space ; “the heavens that declare the glory of God.”

These flashing suns and countless worlds, guided by the hand of omnipotent power and infinite wisdom, continue to run on in their appointed orbits, their silent testimony in accord with the written word ! “The hand that made them is divine.” Ye despisers and haters of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, are ye ready to begin the battle ? We think not. Ye are too helpless in the presence of the creative God. Last of all He made man, the crowning act of creation. On him it was His good pleasure to display His greatest skill. His formation called together the divine council, who said : “Let us make man in our own image.” The likeness and glory were lost by sin.

“*Immanuel.*” This is His name on earth. God made manifest in the flesh to save the world is the crowning expression of His grace. It was great to create, but it was greater to redeem ; greater in love, labor and suffering, if not in power. Let us follow our Immanuel and see what He is doing and suffering. Here is a poor beggar by the wayside, so far as human aid is concerned, hopelessly blind. No man

who can see can estimate the loss. Humiliated and helpless, he opens his palm when he hears the tramp of human feet with the piteous cry, "I am blind!" Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. It may be his last chance, and the multitude are startled by the cry of hope, "O Lord, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" He hopes that Jesus will open his eyes. Deaf to the reproof of the disciples, he repeats the prayer with increased energy, and strains his sightless eyes in hope, until, in His mercy, as well as in evidence of His divine right and power, Jesus opens his eyes and sends him on his way rejoicing. Let us go to Bethesda. Among the many waiting with hope deferred that maketh the heart sick for the moving of the waters, Jesus is speaking to a man who for thirty-eight years has been a hopeless paralytic. To the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" he answers in despondent accents, "I have no one to help me." It is a sad case, seemingly hopeless and forsaken. Help has come at last. His whole frame is quivering under the influence of an unseen energy. The rainbow of hope is kindled in his eyes.

The shrunken muscles are rounding, the dead limbs throbbing in response to the blood dancing once more through its long deserted channels! "The lame walk," is a tame expression to describe the glad man, restored to health, gathering up his bed and leaping like elastic youth to spread the glad tidings to others. Who will cast the first stone? Attention! In appearance and condition here is the most wretched case we have found. From the crown of

his head to the soles of his feet there is no soundness. He is so loathsome, and his disease so dangerous, that the law has ostracised him and left him alone in his wretchedness. "He is a leper," who, in hope and fear, falls at the feet of Jesus with the cry for help: "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Wonderful change! The scabby leprosy is gone at the bidding of the Great Physician, and leaves no mark on its deserted victim.

To the mansion of the dead! Surely if the dead are raised up his enemies will surrender. Four days ago Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, followed him in the funeral march, and as they thought kissed him for the last time until they should meet at the gates of the city. Oftener than to any other place Jesus had directed His weary steps to the pleasant home at Bethany. No wonder, for they loved Him devotedly. His friend Lazarus had died while He was off on duty. The sisters sent Him word that their brother was sick, but He did not come. They were hurt, and said: "If Jesus had been here our brother would not have died." They told Him so when He came four days after. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." I know he is dead, but I am going to raise him up. I am here for that purpose. The crowd had gathered, and while He prays the tear-drops hang like pearls on his quivering eye-lids.

"Jesus Wept." He is a man, but says: "Take ye away the stone." The whole scene is growing profoundly impressive. What is He going to do? With

a loud voice, He cries: "Lazarus, come forth." Heaven and earth bear witness, can the dead hear His voice? Will death surrender its prey to the Nazarene? See, the dead scribe is moving. His eyes are open. His hollow cheeks, a few moments ago cold and pale as the marble slab, are rounding out, and the life-blood throbbing through his veins paints on them the hue of health. He is alive. There is no room for doubt. Jesus says, "Loose him and let him go." He and his sisters are locked in each others arms. Jesus looks on His work, an object-lesson to teach them that all who are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth.

"On to the Cross" We go now to study His sufferings. The wolves have Him at last. From the time He lay on the bosom of Mary—the child born, "the son given," as predicted by the royal prophet and others, the angles singing His birth song, the wise men and shepherds presenting their costly gifts as well as the adoration of their hearts—the wolf of hell, with his furious pack, had been on His track, and at last the Good Shepherd surrenders, all mangled and torn, and shrieking in the agonies of death. Hatred has reached its limit, it can do no more to His person or character. His humiliation and sufferings are complete. He is dying as a criminal, condemned by His own people, on a Roman cross. This is sacrificial work—is the crowning act in the plan of redemption.

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine!"

Ye sinners, haters and despisers of Jesus, His law and His gospel, depend on it here is your only chance for salvation and heaven. Reject Him if you will, stone Him on the cross, wag your heads in mockery, drive the biting steel through His bleeding heart as well as through His hands and feet, and laugh at His gory temples torn by the piercing thorns, but remember, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, is dying for you! Before you cast the first stone and reject Him forever, remember what He is to you. He is the light of the world, which, if quenched, outer darkness begins. He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, able to save or destroy to the uttermost. As King He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. In His hands are the issues of life and of death. To Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. It is infinitely wiser to bow at the cross where mercy is sought and pardon is found, than to bow in hell amid the shrieking horrors of eternal death. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

From the cross they took Him to the tomb, but it could not hold Him. In three days He came out the conqueror of death, flushed with victory and ready for additional conquests. From heaven, where He ascended to His Father, He will come again to judge the world in righteousness. The throne of mercy will have changed into "THE GREAT WHITE THRONE," from which the thunderbolts of wrath shall be hurled against all ungodliness and wicked men.

"Down to hell, there's no redemption,
Every Christless soul must go."

"Sinners turn, why will ye die?
God, your Saviour, asks you why.

God the Father, God the Spirit, join the earnest cry,
Why will ye curse your Lord and die?"

The church below, with all its agencies, warns and beseeches you to lay down your weapons at the cross, and wash your sins in the blood. No longer dare delay. The golden moments are passing by freighted with infinite values, which, if improved, leads to glory and to God. Let no one take your crown. Repent of your sins, tell Jesus that you are sorry that you have ever stoned Him. Join in the army of the Lord, quit your sins, watch and pray, read the scriptures, attend the church and sing with them, "The crowning day is coming by and by." Life is too short, and heaven is too valuable to admit of indecision for a moment, to say nothing of hating and despising the Lord and His church. When you belittle Christ, you despise your own soul. You cannot despise Jesus without despising yourself, your life, your happiness and heaven.

"AT THY WORD."

By Rev. W. S. RONE,

Of the North Carolina Conference (M. E. C., S.).

"And Simon answering said unto Him, Master we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." LUKE v: 5.

What a sublime act is that of simple unquestioning obedience to the word of God, especially when

that word is unsupported by, and seemingly contrary to, the lessons of reason and experience. The Master had come to the disciples on the lake-side in the morning, just at the time when, wearied and disheartened at fishing all the night and taking nothing, they had withdrawn their nets from the water and were washing them. After speaking to the people, he said to Peter "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." The night was the time for fishing on the Sea of Galilee, for, with the clear water of the lake, and the bright rays of the sunlight, the fish could easily see and avoid the meshes of the net by day. It was not reasonable to suppose that they could catch fish now, by daylight, when they had failed to do so after fishing all the night. But Peter recognized the voice that spake to him as above all his reasoning and discouraging experience of the night, and he said, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

At thy word. What a point from which to proceed! What an authority on which to act! He let down the net, and, in doing this, performed one of the sublimest acts on record. Though the simple act of an humble fisherman in lowly life, it was an act of faith and obedience, done at the word of God, that put him into line with the forces and marching of the ages. All else in the universe moves at the word of God except fallen men and fallen angels, and we come into the mighty procession only when we have learned to be perfectly obedient to the word of the Lord. "At Thy Word" is the high-

est possible wisdom, and it ought to be the supreme thought of all Christians to know what the word of God is, and be directed by it in everything, in all that we say and do—in the week-day and on the Sabbath; in the church and in the world; in our spiritual beliefs and secular acts—at thy word.

“At thy word I will let down the net.” The term net may here apply to whatever instrumentalities of good God may command us to use, or let down, or throw out. We are fishing in the sea of life, and we are frequently very much discouraged and disappointed and downcast, and feel like it is no use to go further, or try longer. But whenever there is a clear duty laid on us, a plain “Thus saith the Lord,” whether we can see the way before us or not, our response should ever be like that of Peter, “Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.”

I. In the first place, we should, at the word of the Lord, let down the net *in the waters of business-life*, of honest industry and effort for the things of this life. Many a man, amidst the financial darkness that has lasted so long, especially in our rural life, that is now so deep and so slow to break away, is at the point of giving up his work and running away from his business. Many an individual, many a business enterprise useful, and ordinarily profitable, is on the verge of abandonment. Many a hand is holding loosely and despairingly the plane and the plow-handle and the lever because of the deep discouragement—because they “have toiled all the night and have taken nothing.” Worse than that,

there are those in the midst, or on the verge, of want ; out of anything to go on, out of work, out of employment, seeking but despairing of finding it, and possibly at the point of sitting down and saying "I will try no longer."

And yet there is nothing more clearly and strongly commanded, and which we may, therefore, pursue with greater faith in the helping hand and providence of God, than a needful supply of the things of this life. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," is God's word, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." "Owe no man anything; provide things honest in the sight of all men." "He that provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." It is a great duty bound upon us by the Word of God to be diligent in business and daily industry to the end that we may provide for our own, and owe no man anything. It was in this that Peter was engaged at the time, and for which the Saviour told him to let down his net, for what? For a draught of fishes. To what end? That the wants of the body might be met. And we may rest assured that God, whose word is so strong in regard to this great duty, will, if we perform it faithfully, and with faith in Him, prepare an opening and a way for us, although we cannot see it now.

Peter's reward for letting down his net "at the word of the Lord, was that it was immediately filled with such a draught of fishes that it began to break."

And so we are to go on letting down the net of daily business and frugal, diligent industry, whether results are satisfactory and the future very promising or not. We know not what a day may bring forth, or what the future may have awaiting us. It is true that your best endeavors will not of themselves, bring you prosperity, that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." But we know, also, that God will not forsake His people. "Trust in the Lord and do good," He says, "so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." God's word to everyone of you is "quit yourselves like men," be strong, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, stand fast. Throw not away your shield; "cast not away your confidence." Stand steadily in your rank till the tide of battle turns. Do not cease from your efforts, though discouraged. It is ours to till the soil and sow the seed and water the garden-bed and spread the net, and it is of God, who makes this our duty, to give the increase; and if we cannot see much in our own experience or judgment to encourage to this, it being duty, we are to say, like Peter, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

And God would have us do this cheerfully and bravely, not gloomily and despairingly, that the world may see that there is that in the Christian religion that can sustain the soul in great financial straits, as well as in great spiritual needs. Our Lord does not want as His followers cowards who cannot fight the common battles of life. How, then, should we

be prepared for that lordly chivalry of service, that "wrestle" with "spiritual wickedness in high places?" We are to be heroic examples of the great moral virtues of fortitude and endurance amidst difficulties, as well as shining patterns of the beautiful spiritual graces. Therefore, at the bidding of the Lord, work on with mind and heart and will. This may be the trial that precedes the day of plenty. At His word let down the net once more. He may intend largely to bless you when, by trial, you have been prepared for the benediction.

II. In the second place, we must, at the word of the Lord, let down the net *in the waters of spiritual good*, of personal deliverance from sin, and securing of eternal life. The true Christian life is always a life of progress and advancement, of intense longings in the first place for a better and a holier state, and then of successive steps taken by faith. And yet each one of these steps, from the first one that makes him a Christian and places his feet within the kingdom to the one that places him high in saintliness of character here, and in glorious exaltation hereafter, is a step taken at the word of God. It is a step taken not because we have experienced the way, or have been there before, but because God's Word bids us take it, to reach out, to "let down the net" of faith, to trust Him.

What but the word of God to the children of Israel first induced them to start out of Egypt, and then to move seemingly right down into the Red Sea, and then right down against the waters of the

Jordan when overflowing its banks, and then again right into the hostile land of Canaan. They did not see the wonderful salvation that God had provided just ahead of them, and it was contrary to all reason and all experience that there could be such. But "at His word" they went forward, and the sea opened, and the Jordan divided, and the walled cities of their enemies were thrown down. And so God has wrought salvation and deliverance for millions of His people when they have moved against difficulties at His word. Thus He has provided it for us. Perfect emancipation, complete deliverance from sin! Glorious rescue is what He promises. "If the Son shall make free, you shall be free indeed." "Come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And He bids us let down the net in these waters.

What, then, is your peculiar condition in the sight of God? Do I address some one who is not a Christian, but earnestly desirous of becoming one—who has, perhaps, many times come up to the sanctuary hoping to obtain salvation from sin, peace of mind and rest of soul on the bosom of God, and saying, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him?" I would beg you earnestly in His name to wait no longer. Let down the net once more; let it down now. His word is "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Say to Him, "Lord, Jesus, at thy word I come to thee."

“ Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid’st me come to thee,
Oh Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

Or do you believe yourself to be a Christian, but dissatisfied with your attainment in the divine life? Struggling to rise higher, to come nearer to God, to be purer and better, to dwell in the bright light of His countenance, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, your song

“ Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee ?”

Then do not despair. These are things that bethoken mighty victory. These are the gifts that God is most willing to bestow. “ Covet earnestly the best gifts,” is His word. “ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” In His name, and at His word, let down the net into the water of these promises, and it shall be filled full, till you shall be prepared to shine in His presence forever and forever.

III. But there is a third sense in which, at the word of the Lord, we are to let down the net. Peter’s fishing in this case was not for food or for self only. This was the immediate object; but, as Christ’s disciple, it was typical of a higher service that he was soon to render. With wonder and surprise still depicted in their faces at the great draught of fishes just taken, he turned to the disciples and said, “ Come and follow me: henceforth I will make you fishers of men.” So he says to every one of his disciples now. We are to be fishers of men. We are, there-

fore, at the word of the Lord, to let down the net *for the perishing souls of men* out of Christ. This is His word. He says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The bride, the church, must with myriad tongues unite with the Spirit in saying "come."

The first thing that Andrew did when he had found Christ was to seek out and bring his own brother, Simon, likewise, and this is the great business, the great life-work of believers, the winning of souls, the bringing of others to Christ. Everyone is charged with a commission and a warrant to seek the conversion of his fellows. But for this, the people of God, pure in heart and prepared for heaven, would be taken home to the better life, there to swell the harmony of the heavenly song. But the need is so great, the work is so urgent here, that they are kept in the world for awhile, where for them "to live is Christ." But they must be at the work, and they must be at it with the word, which is the great gospel "net." That is the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe, whether preached in public to the great congregation, or in private in the ear of the individual. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net which a man cast into the sea."

Are we "letting down" this net faithfully? Are there any who can rise up in the judgment and accuse you of unfaithfulness to them? It may be there are some of you, who, for long days and nights, for weeks and months possibly, and even years, have

prayed and worked and waited for the conversion of certain ones, dear children, or loving friends and acquaintances, in the fond hope of seeing them coming home to Christ. But while others have come, you have only been disappointed and disappointed, until the heart has grown sick and sad, and you feel only like saying to the Master, "I have toiled all the night and have taken nothing." But as it is His command, will you add the remainder and, like Peter, say, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

There are some who are doing nothing in this work, nothing in the church, nothing in the Sabbath-school, nothing in their homes, nothing among their neighbors. You hear them say sometimes that they "have had their day in the Sabbath-school and church work." The inference is that they now feel authorized to take it easy. What a thought! Taking it easy in the work of the Lord, when he says "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Are we not ashamed of the case when plainly stated? Can we cease from service when we do not cease from receiving mercy? Yes, we shall take it easy soon, very soon! There will be rest enough in the grave. "The night of death cometh, when no man can work," the long dark night of death, when seed can be no longer sown or sheaves garnered for the Master's use. "Lo! He cometh." Let us, then, to the work, with a heart to do, brave and true, and, in the great "crowning day," He will own and reward us as His own.

CHRIST AS A FRIEND.

BY REV. ROBERT P. PELL, PRESBYTERIAN⁹ EVANGELIST.

"A friend of publicans and sinners."—MATTHEW xi: 19.

We are beginning to see more clearly every day how the Old Testament finds a complete illustration of its contents in the person and work of our Lord. This applies not only to His fulfillment of type and prophecy, but likewise to the general interpretation that His course as Messiah gives to the history of Israel. Moreover, it may even be claimed that many lines of thought in the didactic portions reach a concrete expression in Him alone. If you will examine, for instance, the book of Proverbs, you will discover, scattered here and there, certain passages descriptive of true friendship, which, when gathered together, form a cluster of virtues that are embodied solely in the character of Jesus of Nazareth. It would take a longer time than we have at our disposal to give a detailed examination and proof of this statement. There are certain traits of the perfect friend, however, that are so often lacking in the best human representatives that we may derive great comfort in meditating upon those as exhibited in the life of our Saviour.

I. Solomon asserts that "a friend loveth at all times." So it may be said concerning our Lord, that He never knew a moment in His earthly career when He was unwilling to sacrifice Himself to comply with the demands made upon Him by the most

unworthy suppliant. How many of us, on the contrary, can remember occasions when, on account of some momentary disinclination, we have hesitated to yield our time, possessions or sympathy to meet the needs of those endeared to us. It may have been caused by some ailment or infirmity of the body, some temporary clouding of the mind, or some depression of the spirits, for any one of these has a tendency to estrange us for a season, oftentimes unjustly, from our most intimate companions. Afterwards we may have discovered that the fault lay with us; but that does not relieve us from the mortification of having been guilty, to some extent, of inconstancy. It is a remarkable fact that not an instance of this kind can be found in the life of our Saviour.

Jesus as a friend is constant. Do you recall that charming incident of His dealings with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well? If we had been suffering from the fatigue under which He was laboring that day, doubtless we would readily have excused ourselves from ministering to her in any way whatever. Conscious of an exhausted frame, we become very lenient toward ourselves when duty calls, and neglect those whom we regard as special favorites, trusting that their consideration for our enfeebled state will lead them to condone an occasional dereliction. But as soon as Jesus read the poor woman's countenance He analyzed her condition and deciphered her history, and instantly all weariness disappeared from His body in His eagerness to deliver her from the terrible curse that awaited her. He forgot Him-

self by being lost in her case. This is the key-note to His constancy—His entire and unbroken absorption in others.

Our constancy as friends sometimes encounters another hindrance in some outward circumstance. No severer test can be brought to bear upon it than when we are challenged to brave popular opinion. To stand by a condemned friend when every voice, save ours, is raised against him—what is this but to incur the suspicion that we are likewise partners in his offense against the public weal? But notice how nobly Jesus did this in the case of Zaccheus! Who doubts but that the most high-born and prosperous of Jericho's citizens, carried away for the nonce by the enthusiasm of the multitude that pressed to greet Him on the road, would have gladly thrown open their mansions for the entertainment of our Lord? Those who are supplied with this world's power, position and possessions are ever ready to patronize even the noted leader of a religious reform if it will only gain for them some moral prestige. But Jesus "came to seek and to save that which was lost." His searching gaze, prompted by the anxious heart that never failed to fix itself upon those whom He came to befriend, discerned, amid the dust and foliage, the inquiring stare of the outcast and despised Zaccheus. "Zaccheus, come down; for this day must I abide at thy house." No scorn or derision of religious or social bigot shall make Him turn the cold shoulder to that "lost sheep of the house of Israel." If He could surrender the adoration of angelic hosts to seek

such as Zaccheus, surely He can surrender the fickle favor of a mob of men to save him.

We offer you in Jesus a *constant* friend. This is because His nature is unchangeable. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever." No inward or outward forces can avail to affect His attitude toward the objects of His devotion. He is a friend "that sticketh closer than a brother." Oh! how you need Him in this ever-shifting scene. Changes are continually taking place in our constitution and surroundings that reveal more and more our helplessness. At every turn in life we meet with some new experiences that force us to depend upon others. The transition from health to sickness, from prosperity to want, from life to death, how they throw us willingly or unwillingly upon the kindly offices of our fellows in suffering! Realizing this, upon whom can we lean with assurance of being succored at all times but upon Him "who changeth not."

"Abide with me ; fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide ;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, Oh! abide with me.

"Swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away ;
Change and decay in all around I see ;
Oh! Thou who changest not, abide with me."

II. The author of the Proverbs tells us in another place, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." To inflict pain upon others will most likely result in bringing it back upon ourselves. However much we

may be willing to perform this office (and some are only too eager to do it), we are liable to resent it when it is visited upon our own persons. Yet a judicious discharge of this unpleasant duty is necessary if you ever expect to be a friend in the noblest sense. To refuse to do it when it is for the highest good of our fellow-men, is, as a rule, an indication that we love ourselves more than our neighbor. This difficulty, as much as any other, renders so-called friendship an unfruitful thing.

Now Jesus never hesitated to do this. *As a friend He is faithful.* To be so must at times have been at the expense of the generous promptings of His bosom. As the humble Syro-phenician woman bowed before Him to plead in behalf of her afflicted daughter, surely His instant impulse must have been to grant her request without further parleying. To hesitate for a moment must have caused Him to endure all the agony that an appearance of cruelty on the part of a heart conscious of its own infinite tenderness could inflict. Yet the eternal welfare of this woman required instruction as to the right relationship between Him as a covenanted Redeemer and herself as a Gentile sinner, and in order to enlighten her He must for a moment veil His larger intentions. But His wounding her was in order to her abundant healing—He must be faithful if she were to be saved.

On another occasion Jesus had to utter mysterious and unwelcome doctrines. He was at the very flood-tide of His popularity. To all appearances, if He only continued to win the hearts of the masses as

He had already done, the whole nation with one voice would proclaim His Messiahship. From a human standpoint, it was very important for the accomplishment of His mission that He should not alienate anyone from His standard. But Jesus must be faithful in dealing with the souls of His people. To withhold a particle of the revelation God had commissioned Him to make might increase the number of His followers, but would compass the destruction of them all; while to declare boldly every jot and tittle of the message entrusted to Him might diminish the band of disciples, but would redound to their eternal redemption. How could He hesitate for a moment? It is left for us to adopt a short-sighted as well as a false policy that ends in damnation to all whom it would embrace; but Jesus Christ, building for all time, discloses without modification the truth in its fulness. Having given utterance to it, as He anticipated, many deserted Him. And as He beheld some recklessly casting away the bread and water of life, and others showing a tendency to give up the pursuit of the whole counsel of God, in broken accents He turned to the twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?" Surely that half-suppressed lamentation gives us a hint of how much in this instance His faithfulness must have cost Him.

Dear reader, if, amid the false lights of this world, where a flattering tongue and a lying lip are evermore charged with some ulterior selfish purpose in all their smooth and subtle compliments, you feel the need of a faithful friend, come to Jesus. He will give you

no self-satisfying, and, therefore, no self-destructive, view of your condition. With a relentless application of the law, He will uncover all disguises and disclose your exceeding sinfulness ; with an unquenchable jealousy for the administration of divine justice, He will pronounce against your guilt the severest penalties, and with an unerring insight into your spiritual constitution He will declare your utter helplessness. He may be gazing upon you with the fond but melancholy glance, yearning to gather you beneath His covert of righteousness against the evil day, with which he lingered over Jerusalem when He left her to her doom ; but, as in that case, so in all others, He will not flinch from laying bare the sterner aspects of God's will. It is only thus that He can prepare you to revel in his subsequent disclosures of the unsearchable riches of His grace, when He unbosoms Himself to you as a Saviour. Never can you fathom the depths of His heart—" never can you know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"—until you know to its fullest extent the pit of sin, guilt and helplessness sunk into your own soul.

III. Another passage in the book of Proverbs descriptive of a friend is very suggestive. " Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." When you rub two pieces of this metal together the result of such friction is to brighten and polish them. So the intercourse of a friend with the object of his devotion should be to them a source of cheerful and hopeful views of life. This chimes in with another passage of similar im-

port: "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." According to these sentiments Job's friends missed their calling altogether. No one can question their benevolent intentions. They evidently lavished upon him all their treasures of time and wisdom, endeavoring to lead him to the light. But they only cast a heavier pall about him. Their descendants have become more numerous with the lapse of ages. How many large-hearted persons to-day flock about you, earnestly desiring to be of some practical service; but alas! their temperament or their theory of life is altogether against it. Those sour-visaged friends who are anxious to sacrifice their melancholy feelings that they may bring solace to those who know not the inexpressible comfort of drinking the bitterest dregs of the cup—how easily we could dispense with their generosity! Instead of making some rift in the cloud they only thicken its folds.

Now *Jesus, as a friend, is always inspiring.* Though, in the discharge of His office as a faithful friend, He might temporarily leave you in darkness, it is only that you may be ready to "look to the hills whence cometh your help." He came upon the world of sinners when it was in its extremity of despair. One can easily conceive the wide-spread hopelessness concerning the betterment of the race and the issues of the world to come, that rested like a blighting frost upon the people of that day. This dreary outlook was not confined to the heathen. Many Jews partook of the same spirit. What else could be expected

with a leadership of such a hypocritical character in religious matters? Eternity alone will reveal how many souls were kept out of the kingdom of God by the Pharisees with their exaltation of the works of the law as the only means of salvation, with their assumption of a sanctimonious air to cover their wolfish hearts, and with their imposition of burdens upon others they would not themselves tolerate. It is easy to believe that among the Jews there were some honest and sincere persons, who, having tried to imitate their false leaders, soon realized the emptiness of such a course, felt a contempt for their teachings and practices, and at last surrendered all expectation of doing any better. Who knows but that at some period of their past lives many of the so-called publicans and sinners were respectably religious according to the standard of the day, but afterwards, gaining no spiritual satisfaction, and finding they had been deluded, gave up attempting a life of virtue, and abandoned themselves to extravagant indulgence in sin. This is not the only age in which there has been whitened sepulchres filling up the church of the living God, and, by their stench in the nostrils of decent men of the world, repelling them from His sanctuary and even from His kingdom. To all such wearied and despondent souls, who can doubt that the words of Jesus came as an inspiration, quickening their consciences and reviving their moral purposes, as He told them of the righteousness that comes "by faith and not by works," of the Father who desired "mercy rather than sacrifice," of the

"life and immortality brought to light" through His gospel? Perhaps many such were in His audience that day when He cried, in tones of entreaty, such as could issue only from the Son of Man, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It is a beautiful suggestion of a commentator that the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee must have followed this discourse, and that the notorious woman who lavished her devotion upon Jesus must have obtained her hope of eternal life through this message.

Dear unbeliever, perhaps amid your futile search after some solution to your doubts, you are ready to sink down into the apathy of a confirmed agnostic. Let me plead with you before pursuing such a fatal course, to cast yourself unreservedly upon the friendship of Jesus. He will not mock you by forcing upon you legal responsibilites you cannot discharge; nor will He discourage you by sending you back to fathom all the mysteries of revelation; nor will He degrade you by commanding you to entrust yourself blindly to the authoritative dictum of any ecclesiastical body. You remember how He dealt with the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. The poor wretch had probably lost the opportunity of being healed so often that finally the desire, which had been originally keen and vigorous, had become deadened, so that Jesus had to quicken it by the inspiration of His looks and words. Then instantly, the man's eagerness being restored at the command, He gave him a fresh infusion of vitality, and his

wasted limbs became active once more. Oh ! that you, too, would listen with all the yearning of a dying man to His reviving tones. Says He, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." — Close your ears to all the deafening clatter of this world's wisdom, whether within or without the church, and hang with breathless expectancy upon the voice of Jesus.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say—
 'Behold, I freely give
 The living water; thirsty one
 Stoop down and drink, and live!'

I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream;
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 And now I live in Him!"

And now, dear reader, before parting, may this thought break upon your conscience with a force never felt before : "Christ's friendship for you was sealed by the shedding of his blood." Not by some slight token, which, however precious, has cost, perhaps, the sweat of the brow, but by a gift that wrung from Him, as he resolutely set it apart for you, the sweat of blood. Our Saviour, measuring the height of human self-sacrifice, said : "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Afterwards the Apostle, rising upon this as a base, with a triumphant tone sublimely exclaims : "But God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners [*i. e.*, enemies] Christ died for us." Yes, Christ's friendship for the sinner began

wholly upon His side, and so it continues to be altogether upon His side, in the majority of cases, even until this hour. Are you so rich in possessions for the life that now is and in promises for the life that is to come that you can afford to spurn a friendship bestowed so freely and sealed so securely? May the time never come when He, who now knocks for admittance as your friend, because of His rejection at your door shall turn to be your enemy! "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy and fought against them." Isaiah lxiii: 10.

THE ATONEMENT.

By Rev. JOSHUA BROCKETT, D. D.,

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"And all things *are* of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ Jesus."—II COR. v: 18.

Man through sin wandered away from and lost the true knowledge of God. He could not, because of sin, approach—and it was equally impossible for God in His supreme divinity to draw near to man without destroying him with the brightness of divine glory. The whole mental and spiritual organism of man was deranged by sin. His temperament was distorted and warped. His sympathies were void of life. Upon his affections rested the blight of death. Man hated life and sought death's shade because his

deeds were evil. Being no longer controlled by the nobler powers of the soul, he became the abject slave of carnal sense—nature's sinful passions reigned supreme. The brightness of the Creator's presence that attended man's sinless state could be no longer seen, but instead the cold, cheerless shadows of death's rayless night crept on apace. Dense ignorance like a pall enveloped the mind, superstition mystified the soul.

Man—lost, guilty, wretched being—soul and spirit, was enwrapt in the winding-sheet of death! The loving Father called to him, bidding him, "Man, turn from sin and live." In numberless ways he tried to win him back, but man closed his ears to the call, refused to heed. Divine councils were disregarded; infinite love was scorned; messages were spurned; messengers were stoned and put to death. Deep upon deep of hell's awful state awaited the soul's swift approach. Fiend and demon wrought what seemed to be the eternal destruction of humanity. The burden of prophecy was stilled; the church of the prophets, so far as its real work was concerned, had reached its end. A cloud of sinful gloom overshadowed the earth, and dark despair sat in blackness throned within the human soul. Hope, in terror, fled to its refuge in the bosom of God, while dark forebodings, like vultures with heavy wings, hovered o'er the dreary wastes of the damned.

Then it was when the world became a pit of degradation; and man like the foul beast of the grave, skulked amid the ruin and desolation of his own,

like a shaft of holy fire lighting for a brief space the gloom. The voice of the herald of Jordan startled the lethargic ears of the Judean world with the trumpet command, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Swiftly following which came the declaration that one mightier than he should come to take away the sin of the world.

The fullness of time was come. The Lord Jesus appeared as Jehovah God manifested in the flesh. He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; He came to bring life and immortality to man by the light of His life—the Gospel. He assumed our nature with all its imperfections and liability to temptation. He was exposed to every form of satanic cunning and scheme. All the enemies of humanity and every variety of sin marshalled their malignant forces against Him. Because God in His assumed humanity conquered all the enemies of mankind, we sing, "Jesus paid it all." Or paid the debt and made me free.

But just here permit me to say, Christ did not come to pay a debt, but to conquer man's enemies. He came to conquer death, to subdue the power of the grave, not to suffer the wrath of the Father. He came to fulfill every part of the law, not to suffer the penalty of its violation. This could not be done without the assumption of our nature. Hence the necessity of the Incarnation. As God could not draw near to man in his (man's) simple state, and man could not draw nearer to God, it was necessary that

there should be an atonement and a mediator that man might be saved.

The primary meaning of the word atonement, as one can readily see by its division, is *at-one-ment*, to be reconciled or in agreement with God. In that agreement lies the condition of man's salvation. Thus by Christ's perfect work for man, by which the violated law was fulfilled, He did not make a penal sacrifice to appease the alleged wrath of God, to satisfy divine justice, or to purchase God's favor for man.

Of what, therefore, does the atonement properly consist?

The first act of God in the work of atonement was the assumption of our human nature—the manifestation of Himself to the world in a material body like our own. God assumed the corrupt nature of man in the fullest, broadest and deepest sense of the term. He was, as a man, tempted in all ways, yet He sinned not. The effect of our sin He bore. The anguish attendant upon human sorrow He endured, hungering as we hunger, weeping as we weep—an amazing paradox of heaven! Positively human, absolutely divine.

Thus, in holy but solemn ecstasy sings the poet:

"The Son of God in tears the wondering angels see.
Be thou astonished, O. my soul.
He shed those tears for thee."

The sun rose and set upon His daily labor of loving beneficence. His compassion sprang to the rescue of the fallen.

As a cleansing font His virtue healed the sick; His omnipotence bade the lame walk, the blind eye to behold the myriad and varicolored beauties of earth and sky, and worship their Maker; by command thrilling the souls of the deaf with unutterable joy, as all God's feathered orchestra on hill and in valley, for the first time, poured forth their carols of praise, anthems of joy through ear, heart and soul.

His creative power revoked the dread decree of death, vetoed the stern law of the grave—matchless before heaven's hosts, appalling to hell's spirits, He stood at the grave where lay His friend. Like a trumpet, shaking Death on his sable throne, rolling along the corridors, penetrating the galleries and searching the archives of the dead went His voice in command, bidding the spirit return and the body come forth.

Down from its exalted state, back from the emerald shores of paradise, in obedience to the command of its Lord, came the soul of the dead to be once again environed by the thrall of finitude.

Again: In His work of atonement hell witnessed, and only heaven and Himself knows, the gloomy horrors attendant upon the forty days fast in the Judean desert. The midnight dews fell upon His locks, and the winds of heaven caressed His brow as He prayed on Olivet. Angel and demon stood aghast at the sight of praying and bleeding agony in Gethsemane's lonely vale. He who sat in glory throned in the first eternity and spake the world into existence, framing laws past human ken for its

control, there presents the fearful sight of the weeping suppliant pleading for human sympathy.

On that struggle between light and darkness depended man's eternal destiny. Turning from his wearied and slumbering disciples, once again he girt up his soul for the final struggle. About Him the night winds were stilled, as though Nature held its breath in suspense doubtful of the issue between the contending powers. Above his head a starless sky bent its black vault in fearful concave. Affrighted fowls sought distant retreats. The scene was all dark, save the angry light of the lightning's flash, which ever and anon, like a red rapier, cut ragged paths across the black canopy on high. The booming of distant thunder broke the silence and rolled along the crests of Bashan's hills until hushed by its own majestic lullaby. Amid such surroundings your Saviour prostrated Himself, while the groans resultant from that awful struggle burst from His bosom and echoed through the lonely vale, until carnal power in Him gave up the struggle and cried aloud, "Not my will, but thine be done." That night heaven rejoiced. The angel of mercy threw wide the gates of redemption. Disguises longer rendered useless, in a whirlwind of hell-fury Satan descend to quaking hosts and a tottering throne. Therein lay humanity's atonement and redemption through the overcoming, by His humanity, of all the temptations to which it was exposed, by subduing in it every lust and evil passion.

Again, by that perfect work, Christ lifted His, and with His our humanity from its state of degradation into a progressive conjunction with the divine nature of the Father.

The last of the Saviour's temptations was in the passion of Gethsemane. While between the confines of life and death, His last love-offering for man was the gift of His humanity on the world's sacrificial altar—Calvary. His final victory was His resurrection from the dead. Sin begets and is death's parent. Death makes possible hell. Hence, by His subjugation of sin death was deprived of its sting or power over humanity.

Thus His humanity was eternally glorified, and all humanity was lifted whence it had fallen—the human was as one with the divine. Again it became possible for God to sway the human will by the divine, to restore distorted temperaments to their original state, and to cleanse the affections from the pollution of carnal senses.

United in the prosecution of their work is the loving divinity of the Father and the untiring devotion of the Son.

Arising from this conjunction of Father and Son is the Holy Spirit, who shall forever abide with us in the right, instructing and leading us into boundless fields of heavenly wisdom. Into this blessed state all the millions of earth may come and be at peace with God through the atonement of the Son. Here no frowning Sinai with forbidding heights impedes our path—no thunders of exacting justice below to affright the ransomed soul. Deep, lasting,

unending peace abides, a benediction over all. Perfect joy accompanies the Christian thenceforward, and, as they one by one approach life's end, death's shadows resolve themselves into fleeting vapors. And the matchless love displayed in the atonement completes itself in glory upon glory, splendor upon splendor, and majesty upon majesty of the perfected at-one-ment of redeemed and Redeemer in the unclouded realm of light in the great beyond.

ON THE NATURE OF FAITH.

BY REV. J. E. BRISTOWE,
of the North Carolina Conference (M. E. C., S.).

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith.

"And the Lord said, if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."—LUKE xvii:5, 6.

Perhaps no word in Christian theology, and in all religious books, finds a place so prominent as this little word faith. In conversation on the great question of personal salvation, for ages this word faith has been used to express the condition of our reaching heaven. It is the keystone which binds the arch that bridges the chasm opened by sin between God and the sinner. To my mind, its true nature is not understood by many who use it in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

If none can be saved without faith, it is important that, if possible, it should be so clearly defined that every soul, to be saved by it, should understand it.

In hope of throwing some light on this all-important question I feel called upon to cast in my mite, in the name of my Redeemer and Deliverer.

Jesus our Lord was and still is unwilling that any who come to Him for information should go away ignorant of the nature of spiritual growth and the laws which govern it, hence He opens the way to make room for the lesson by saying, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Notice here that unintentional trespass is sanctified. Some one has expressed in these lines a great truth that should be remembered:

"Time to me this truth hath taught,
'Tis a truth that's worth revealing,
That more offend for want of thought
Than from any want of feeling."

The disciples, no doubt, had an idea that under certain conditions they ought to forgive an offence, but here Jesus enjoins it to an extent unheard of before, and it staggered their faith as they thought, and they said unto the Lord, "increase our faith."

Let us notice, then, carefully—

First. The apostles' prayer.

Second. The Lord's answer; and,

Third. Draw some inferences which may be of service to us all.

The prayer: "Increase our faith."

We are perhaps too ready to believe the apostles above mistake, and never question the propriety of anything they did (Judas excepted). They had a false view of Messiah and His kingdom, which laid the foundation out of which grew a multitude of errors. Here, in their prayer, they showed an erroneous conception of faith. They regarded faith as a necessary power, in the sense of money deposited in bank to their credit, which could be drawn out at pleasure to meet the emergencies of life.

To illustrate the idea: I have ten millions of dollars on deposit in some solvent bank subject to my order. I feel that I can run an extensive business, but if I have no surplus money I feel that my ability to do business is narrowly limited. This was their error. It may be ours. They had not as yet fully understood the real nature of saving faith. How many thousands of Christians to-day are laboring under the same mistake? How many are ready to say, if I had as much faith as Abraham, then I would do the works of Abraham; or had I as much faith as Moses and Joshua, I would lead the church out of the wilderness, storm Jericho with a shout and put an end to all wickedness. Jesus saw their mistake and endeavored to correct it without discounting their devotion to right. In His answer to their prayer, the most lucid and luminous definition and application is given perhaps to be found anywhere in the whole Bible, with an illustration to impress it, which is the next thing to consider.

"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed: Notice, no reference is here made to the insignificance or littleness of the seed, but to its nature. In it is the life principle, a germ of progress when submitted to certain conditions. For instance, at the proper season put it in the moist earth, and under the genial influence of the sun the hard case becomes soft and opens, the life principle becomes active, progress begins, and from this smallest of seeds comes the greatest of herbs. Thus, by co-operation with God in Nature an apparent impossibility becomes a glorious reality. Place this wonderful seed upon the tin-roof and leave it there, and it is only a question of time when the life principle is gone and gone forever. The sun is the savor of life *unto life*, or death unto death. Everything depends upon meeting all the conditions.

Now, then, faith of the same nature, containing the life principle, submitted to the field of action, under the mellowing rays of the sun of righteousness progress in divine life begins. Idols fall and are broken, and many wonderful results, otherwise impossible, are accomplished.

If we had this faith we might say to this sycamine tree of sin in every form, to these doubts and fears that so often trouble us, "Be thou plucked up, root and all, and be thou planted in the sea," and it would obey us.

This is a proverbial saying used in several instances in the Bible to denote things very difficult to be done, or apparently impossible. But from the fact that we know that seeds will germinate, we would be about as ready to doubt the possibility of the one as the other, and would call either a miracle.

From these facts we draw the following conclusions:

1. That faith is a living, active principle, joined together with works by God himself, and although almost every man, living or dead, has exhausted his strength and skill to secure their divorce, yet failure has crowned his every effort. They were born together; they live together; die together—are buried in the same grave and one slab marks their last resting-place. Faith and works sustain the same relation to each other as the body and spirit, so far as this world is concerned.

2. We learn that our necessity is not so much a want of faith, as a disposition or will to use what we have already. It is in the use of means that gain is made. Faith, like money, can be of no service (substantially) unless used.

3. Whosoever believeth that there is a God, and that He is a rewarder of all who diligently seek Him, whether in the church or out of the church, converted or unconverted, has faith enough to start with. If he will begin now to use it as God directs, and continue to use it all through life, it will take him safe to heaven. Like any other infant it will grow and develop only by exercise.

God will not burden us with a useless supply. We have more than we use now, and all that we need. More could be of no service until we have used the supply already on hand. "To him that hath shall be given," etc. Take a lighted lantern out into the darkness (as we have the Bible in this dark world). Its light disperses the darkness on every side for a distance of ten to twenty feet, so that we may discover the way and any danger and shun it as easily and as effectually as in day-light (so the Bible is a lamp lighted by the spirit disclosing all the dangers lying close at hand and points out the way of escape to every honest inquirer). The lamp reveals any beauty that may chance to smile within its compass, and thus breaks the monotony of things and imparts the needed inspiration and courage to the weary traveler. (So God's word reveals the beauties of holiness, and an occasional glimpse of the heavenly city, and the joys of the Redeemer.) But if we do not take hold of the lantern and move, the hideous disclosures, as well as the beauties, soon lose their power to affect us in any way, either to frighten or inspire. The same is true of the Bible reader unless he moves forward with the light. There are mysteries in the dark that never can be solved but in the light. To bring the light to bear upon them, it must be carried to them. Move forward and the mysteries will solve themselves. Only those things are mysterious to us of which we are ignorant. We solve the mystery of the germination of seeds in God's way. The wonders of faith can be

solved in no other. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The same in kind, with increase.

Reader, are you sowing in faith, walking in its light every day, in your home, in your business; are you living as seeing Him who is invisible? Sowing in time seeds of active faith which will produce fruits of eternal life?. What we do must be done quickly. If we have already wasted much time, so much greater the necessity to begin this moment and persevere unto the end. O how sad the state of him who has been idle for eleven hours of the day, only one hour left in which to do the work of twelve!

Thank God, sinner, you need not despair; you may yet, by God's help, make sure your peace, calling and election. Jesus invites you now, the eleventh hour. Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plains. The last hour is passing. Soon it will be said, "Let him alone," or "Come ye blessed of my father."

Now, sinner, what will you do? Decide at once. Will you begin now to use all the light that God has so graciously given, or will you decide to wait until a more convenient season, and thus suffer yourself to be deceived, as in the past, until the last opportunity is forever gone. Decide now.

" Nay, but I yield, I yield,
I can hold out no more.
I sink by dying love compelled
And own thee conqueror."

And pray with all thy heart.

“ Help me to watch and pray
And on thyself rely,
Assured if I my trust betray
I shall forever die.”

May we thus, in God’s own way, increase our faith
as we have need.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

By Rev. SOLOMON POOL, D. D.,
Of the North Carolina Conference (M. E. C., S.).

“ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”—II TIMOTHY iii: 18.

If the text is true, the Scriptures are divinely inspired; if the Scriptures are divinely inspired, the text is true. The standard authors offer many convincing proofs of the truth that the Bible is inspired of God, and the most cultivated and enlightened of our race have accepted this truth; it therefore remains for its opponents to disprove it. This they have never done, and can never do. If the text be untrue, then there has been, and still is, practiced upon the world a prodigious fraud; and that upon the most astute and profound intellects of our race. Our fathers and mothers have died hugging this great delusion to their bosoms. If the Bible be a cunningly devised fable, then bad men and devils have occasion for joy; and good men and angels for sorrow.

But if the Bible be true, then we have here the most momentous fact in the universe. The Bible is either prodigiously true or prodigiously false.

The Bible makes short work with the atheist; it simply pronounces him a fool in his heart, and passes on. The text is a reply to the deist, the man who admits the divine existence, but discredits the divine revelation. He accepts the light of Nature, but rejects the light of Scripture. He presents the paradox of being the most credulous, and, at the same time, the most incredulous of men. He believes what is unproved and unreasonable, and disbelieves what is proved and reasonable. It is most reasonable that God should give rational man a direct revelation; it is most unreasonable that He should not. That he has actually done so has been proved satisfactorily, and is admitted by the wisest and best of men. It is accepted as a fact throughout enlightened Christendom, and yet here and there an infidel lifts his unholy head and dissents. He will attempt to argue that Christianity is a falsehood, and, on the same sheet, will date his production *anno Domini* 1892. He rejects the Christian theology, while he accepts the Christian chronometry.

The suggestion has been well made by some one that the Bible must have been the work of the devil, or of man, or of God. And it is true it must have had its origin in hell, or on earth, or in heaven. If not in the first, nor the second, then in the third. If Satan did not inspire it, nor bad men, nor good men, then it must have been God-given, heaven-sent, divine.

I. It did not originate with Satan.

Would the arch enemy of God and man ever have been disposed to give to the world a religion so benevolent and pure? Would he ever have set before us such a perfect code of morals? Would he ever have attached such hopes to virtue, and such threats to vice? With all his fiendish malice and hatred for God would he ever have set before us such lofty descriptions of the divine nature? Would he ever have invested heaven with such glorious attractions, and painted hell, his own abode, with such awful horrors, and thundered against himself such equitable denunciations?

In the Scriptures he is represented as the adversary of God and man. Would he have so represented himself? Says the Bible, "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." Would he thus have spoken of himself? Says the Bible, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet." "He laid hold on the dragon; that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit." A man must be supremely credulous who can believe the Bible to be Satan-inspired.

Says the text, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" and says Peter, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." So the Bible seems to be the special production of the

Holy Ghost, the third person in the God-head. He who attributes this work to Satan, therefore, may be in danger of that unpardonable sin, which has no forgiveness, either in this world, or in the world to come. Who dare to be so insane as to believe, or so blasphemous as to assert, that the Bible is of Satanic origin ?

II. *It did not originate with Man.*

If the Bible is not the production of Satan, then it must be the work either of man or of God. If it had its origin with man, then it must be the work either of bad men, or of good men.

1. Is the Bible the production of bad men? Would bad men have presented to the world and have promulgated a code of morals so sublime, a system of ethics so perfect? Would they have so extolled the virtues, and denounced 'the vices of men'? Would bad men ever have framed the decalogue, and inculcated love to God, and love to man, and set forth the pure and holy principles of the gospel? Would they have inspired, and given the world a book whose every page passes condemnation upon themselves? Says Moses, "Every man shall be put to death for his sins." Says Solomon, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Says David, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Says Paul, "The wages of sin is death." Says John, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Says the Psalmist, "The wicked shall be turned into

hell, and all the nations that forget God." And again, "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest." Would bad men have devised a fable, and have given it to the world, which pronounces such curses upon themselves?

It may be said that bad men would have written the Bible, if thereby the results could be beneficial to themselves. But no such results were probable. On the contrary, they saw before them only persecution, torture and death. The Bible was evidently not produced by men who disbelieved its declarations. Men will often labor earnestly to induce others to agree with them in opinion, but do they labor, and even suffer, to induce men to differ from them in opinion? If the Bible be a human production, it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that it was the work of unbelievers. Indeed, it has always been infidels who would overthrow the Scriptures. It has been believers who have promulgated them.

No, bad men would never have given the Bible to the world, and especially at the cost of their lives. A bad man is an opponent of sacred truth, not its advocate. A corrupt heart and an infidel creed usually go together.

A dissolute life and an open antagonism to Christianity usually go hand in hand. There is no congeniality between unbelief and the Word of God. Consider for a moment the characters of some of the most famous, or infamous, opponents of Divine Truth. Says Richard Watson, in substance, Blount com-

mitted suicide because prevented from an incestuous marriage; Tyndal was notoriously infamous; Hobbes changed his principles with his interests; Morgan continued to profess Christianity, while he wrote against it; the moral character of Voltaire was mean and detestable; Bolingbroke was a rake and a flagitious politician; Hume was revengeful, disgusting, vain, and an advocate of adultery and suicide; Tom Payne was the slave of low and disgusting habits; Rousseau was an abandoned sensualist and guilty of the basest acts.

Would any jury of intelligent men decide that the Holy Scriptures were inspired by men of this character? Have they any marks of being produced by bad men?

2. Is the Bible the work of good men? True, God made good men His amanuenses, but they were not the authors. They profess to write by divine inspiration, and for their utterances always have a "thus saith the Lord." If the Bible was their own production, they were untruthful, gross impostors, bad men, and as such would never have given it to the world. Bad men *would* not have produced the Holy Scriptures, and good men *could* not have done so.

May it be said that the authors were good men who acted under a delusion—that they were fanatics? This was charged upon St. Paul; "Thou art beside thyself." But is it at all probable that even two or three men should have been affected with the same spirit of fanaticism? Is it reasonable to suppose that all the authors of the various books of the Bible were

thus affected, that so many good men were all "beside" themselves? Is it reasonable to suppose that their fanaticism led them to foretell events in the distant future which have been exactly fulfilled; that it led them to work the most astonishing miracles; that it led unlettered peasants, and fishermen to evolve and transmit to posterity the most perfect code of morals, the most sublime principles of philosophy, and the purest system of ethics ever known? Is it reasonable to suppose that this fanaticism led so many to the most perfect agreement in their lofty conceptions of God, and in the statement of a religion which, despite opposition and persecution has steadily grown, until it dominates the most cultivated, enlightened and powerful men and nations of the earth? Mohammed may have been a fanatic. Unless he was a bad man, he did act under a delusion. He was, however, only one man, but the Bible was written by many different men. One man may be deluded, but it is not reasonable to believe that so many should all be deceived, and that this deception should lead to perfect harmony of doctrine, and to the production of the most masterly work ever written, and upon the most profound subject that can engage the human intellect. It certainly requires a greater effort to believe the Bible false than to believe it true. The credulity of the deist is unsurpassed.

III. The Bible, then, had its origin in God.

If it is not the work of Satan, nor of bad men, nor of good men, what is the conclusion? If it had not

its origin in hell, nor on earth, where did it originate? The only rational answer is found in the declaration of Paul, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This book is God-given, heaven-sent, divine.

And is it not, in every respect, worthy of such an author? Is it not just what might be expected, not from Satan, nor from bad men, nor from good men, but from God? Look at the sublimity of its doctrines, the purity of its morals, the benevolence of its spirit, the consolation it affords in sickness and in death. No philosopher can account for the rise, progress and prevalence of Christianity in opposition to the natural dispositions of men, their prejudices, and to many of their worldly plans, without admitting it attended by divine power. Then, too, truth bears inspection. The more carefully the Bible is studied, the more highly it is prized. Infidels are usually ignorant of its contents, and are not qualified to pass judgment upon its claims. They are usually immoral in their lives, and no wonder they antagonize a book that reproves and condemns them.

The death-bed brings us to an honest hour. In the prosperous hours of life and health, men may be deluded, and they may seek to deceive others, but rarely so when they stand upon the shores of eternity. That is an hour of revelations, awful and grand. The infidel has often, therefore, in that hour, detected and confessed his delusion. No instance, however, is recorded where one who enjoyed the assurance of

divine pardon in life has regretted his faith in the Word of God, or sent back a message warning his friends against his mistake, and the delusions of Christianity. Said Tom Payne, referring to his "Age of Reason," "If ever the devil had agency in any work, he had it in my writing that book." Said Voltaire, "I am abandoned by God and man; I would give half I am worth for six months longer to live." Said the dying Altamont, "My principles have poisoned my friends, my extravagance has beggared my boy, my unkindness has murdered my wife, and is there another hell? Oh! thou blasphemed, but indulgent God, hell is a refuge if it but hide me from thy face!" Said Gibbon, the eloquent historian of the Roman Empire, "All things are fleeting; before me all is dark and doubtful."

Turn to the bedside of the dying Christian. Said John Knox, "I am not anxious whether I die or not, for if I die I shall be with God, and if I live He will be with me." Said John Wesley, "The best of all is, God is with us." Said Payson, "The celestial city is in full view." Said Stephen Gano. "I breathe the air of heaven."

And yet, in the face of all these testimonies, there are in this Christian land, in this enlightened age, bold, blatant infidels who inject their deadly poison into the hearts of our young men. "They speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to

whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Their companionship is more fatal than the plague or the serpent. Their presence is poison, their breath is perdition.

We read of the death plant of Java. It is rarely found, and only in volcanic districts. The flowers are large, milk white and attractive, but with all their beauty they distill a deadly perfume so powerful as to destroy either vegetable or animal life. The pure and fragrant lilly when set within the range of this sickening, pungent perfume soon droops and dies. The modest violet and queenly rose wither and fade away in its vicinity. The bird of paradise, when it ventures near, loses his brilliant plumage and falls fluttering and lifeless to the ground. The bold adventurer, or unwary traveler who approaches it, experiences violent convulsions which draw the mouth into a fearful grin, followed by headache, insensibility and death. It fitly represents the modern infidel. His baleful association blights all that is pure, and modest, and lovely, and of good report. The odor of his presence afflicts the soul with moral convulsions that terminate in the sardonic grin and endless pangs of perdition. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies
And bind the gospel to my heart."

CHRIST'S COMING.

By REV. J. A. REAGAN, A. M., M. D.

"He came unto His own and His own received Him not."—JOHN i:11.

There are but few subjects of more interest to the Christian world than the one we propose briefly to investigate; nor are there many from which we can learn more strikingly the necessity of implicit obedience to divine precepts. Did Christ come as the Scriptures foretold? or are the Jews right in still looking for another? It was to them that the prophets spake; in their midst, and before their eyes signs and wonders were performed. It was to them that the law was given, and they were the acknowledged exponents of the same; and yet they declared that he who called himself Christ was an impostor; that his disciples were deluded, and the Christian world humbugged. This declaration, coming from the source it does, deserves at least some notice; and if the coming of Christ cannot be established beyond all successful contradiction, we had better abandon our faith and chime in with the Jews in looking for a Saviour yet to come. But, on the other hand, if we are able to prove successfully that He is the very Christ, the Saviour of men, the "God with us," the "anointed" of heaven, the one foretold by the prophets, the great prototype to which all other types pointed, then may we stand fast and firm in our faith, and glory in that we have embraced Him as our Saviour.

In order to this, we will notice some of the prophecies relating to His coming, and the circumstances connected therewith, as well as their fulfillment.

The manner and circumstances under which those prophecies were communicated to man were peculiar; nevertheless, when we rightly understand them they show the wisdom of God in thus arranging them.

The first prophecy in relation to the coming of Christ was given in the form of a promise, without telling the time, circumstances, name, lineage or anything else whereby the most distant idea could be formed of Him, save that He was to "destroy the works of the devil." This prophecy was delivered in these words to the serpent, doubtless in the presence of Adam and Eve: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is evident that our first parents, as well as subsequent generations, could not have looked for a temporal fulfillment of this promise, or prophecy, for had they done so, no comfort could have been derived by it. They had just sinned—merited the displeasure of God—justly brought upon them His wrath and indignation; were to be driven from the *garden* and their converse with the Almighty, and deprived of His smiles and blessings. And, if with all these miseries pressing upon them, He had told them, or they had understood, that they were *literally* to bruise the serpent's head, would it not have been adding misery to misery, instead of giving comfort to the disconsolate? It

was a restoration to the favor of God that they desired; peace and happiness for themselves and children that they earnestly sought, and this came to them in the language above given, and faith in that promise gave them peace, mitigated their sufferings and enabled them to endure their banishment.

This promise, in itself, was not sufficient for those who had a disposition to doubt and quibble; nor would it have enabled us to embrace *anyone* as the *Messiah*. With this declaration alone, we would have been liable to imposition in every age. Some would have followed one and some another, each claiming to be sound in faith, and contending that all others are wrong. But God does not leave things in this way, for He brings ends together in such a way that His people may well say, "He perfects what His hands begin." After a lapse of something over two thousand years, God again appears to man in another promise drawing nearer the point, and limiting the fulfillment of the previous promise to the lineage or descendants of Abraham, saying: "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all nations be blessed." Previous to this it was not only unknown at what time He should come, but of what family He should be born, but now the glorious promise came as the mid-day Sun bursting from the chaos of darkness, and limits it to the descendants of that faithful servant of God. But even yet there was impenetrable gloom hanging over the fulfillment of this glorious promise. This, however, was not to remain so long, for God determined to arrange it in a way that could not be gainsaid.

Old Israel or Jacob, after a long pilgrimage of one hundred and forty-seven years, was brought by the hand of affliction near death's door, and here God in his last hours removed the veil, poured into his sinking heart the renewal of past promises, and showed him their fulfillment. After Jacob had blessed a part of his children, he called for Judah, and with eyes turned toward heaven and a heart filled with divine inspiration, he says, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." How consoling! how transcendantly glorious must have been this promise? and with what joy must it have been received? The time—the blessed time—was now told. Judah was to hold the "sceptre" and have a "law-giver" until He that was promised should come. Was not this enough? He was to descend from Abraham, as had been told, and now the time was imperfectly made known.

Let us, therefore, briefly call your attention to the fulfillment of these prophecies. Paul in writing to the Galatians, says: "But when the fullness of *the time* was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And John in his first general epistle, says, "He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Here we are

assured that he came at *the time*, and did the work which was implied in the first promise—"destroyed the works of the devil." But in the history of the Jewish nation to the weak and doubting heart fate seems, at times, against His coming before Judah shall lose the "sceptre" and "law-giver." The Jews apostatized; the God of their fathers was angry with them; they were driven before their enemies; despoiled of their wealth; and led captives to Babylon. But still those who remained were permitted to exercise their own laws, and to *weakly* sway the sceptre of Judah. Again, when more prosperous days had dawned, Alexander, the terror of the world, who had laid waste and made desolate all the nations through which he passed, drew near to Jerusalem, their hearts sank within them; the weak sceptre trembled; and the pains of death encompassed them. But before he arrived, God, who "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," had subdued his ambitious heart; turned his wrath to love, and Israel was left alone in quiet. Such are the workings of the Almighty.

But, notwithstanding the prophecy declared that "Shiloh" should come before Judah should lose the sceptre, and the angels now testified that he had come, yet, even here there was some room left for imposition, as we shall hereafter see. Daniel, however, confirms the prophecy by foretelling the precise year and month, if not day, in which He should come: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the trans-

gression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore weeks."

The Jews had Sabbath years, by which their time was divided into weeks of years; each prophetic week denoting seven years—hence Daniel's "seventy weeks" stand (prophetically) for *four hundred and ninety years*. Most of the learned agree that the birth of Christ took place in the month *Nisan*, in the year of the Julian Period 4746. Reckoning back from this period four hundred and ninety years, we are brought to the same month, *Nisan*, in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, at the very time that Ezra received the commission from this monarch to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem."

In order to distinguish the promised Messiah from all others, and leave no reasonable ground for cavil and doubt, God has given us, by the holy prophets, many incidents connected with his coming, etc., which we will briefly notice.

1. *Christ was to have a forerunner.* Isaiah, when speaking of him (the forerunner), says: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Luke says, "He (John) came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; as

it is written in the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Again, it is said in Malachi, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come into his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." This messenger is called "Elijah," by the same prophet. Hence the Jews asked John if he was Elias, or that prophet.

2. *Jesus was to be born of a virgin.* "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel." Isaiah vii: 14. This was most strikingly fulfilled; for the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus.*"

This is so plain that comment is entirely unnecessary.

3. *The place of Christ's birth, also, was foretold.* And this, being correctly understood, is one of the

clearest and most convincing prophecies connected with the coming of Christ; and removes every possible chance for imposition. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."—Mich. v: 2. "God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn."—Num. xxiv: 8. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."—Hos xi: 1. "For the child shall be a Nazarite unto God." In these prophecies there seems to be, at first view, a contradiction; but, on a closer examination, it will be seen that the wisdom of God is made manifest in this arrangement. Let us look at it: Had God only said that Christ should be born in "Bethlehem Ephratah;" had the time of His birth been pointed out also; and had even His forerunner been seen preparing the way for Christ, with all His foretold insignia upon Him; yet there might have been some room left for imposition; for there might have been others besides Christ, who, having been born in the same year, month and place with Jesus, would have urged *their* claims to the Messiahship. But the discrepancy above named entirely precluded the possibility of even a plausible pretension to such claims on the part of any imposter; and the obscurity thrown around those predictions aids us much, when developed or precisely fulfilled, as has been done, in distinguishing the true from every false Christ. Had there arisen an impos-

tor in Bethlehem, he could not have succeeded in his fraud, from the fact that he was not "called out of Egypt." And had there been one professedly "called out of Egypt," he would not have been entitled to the appellation of "*a Nazarene*." And had one come out of Nazareth, he would have been equally wanting. But were all these prophecies fulfilled in the person of Christ? Let us see: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David), to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son." This fact is also established by the testimony of the "wise men," and the "star" which guided them to the place where He lay, as well as the angels that appeared to the shepherds who were feeding their flock, saying, "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." This is proof sufficient that He was "born in Bethlehem." But was He also "called out of Egypt"? "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word." But when Herod was dead, the angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph, saying "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." We now

see that He was "born in Bethlehem," and "called out of Egypt." It only remains for us to see that He *legally* received the appellation of "a Nazarene," and then we are done with this part of our subject. "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." This must certainly put the refutation of Christ's coming in the manner foretold entirely beyond even the attempts of infidels and skeptics.

4. *Christ was to be betrayed by a friend, as had been foretold.* David says, "My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." And the Evangelists informs us that "Satan entered into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve: And he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money." By consulting the history of inspiration farther, we learn that Judas had seen the blind restored to sight; the lame made to walk; the deaf caused to hear; the dumb enabled to speak; lepers instantly cleansed; devils cast out, and even the dead restored to life; that he had thus seen the power of God made manifest, and for the paltry sum of "thirty pieces of silver" or fifteen dollars he

betrayed the Lord of Glory "into the hands of wicked men !

5. *Christ was to be dumb before His persecutors.* " He was oppressed and he was afflicted ; yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." This declaration, made seven hundred and twelve years before Christ, was most strikingly fulfilled by him—" And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then, said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee ? And he answered him too never a word : insomuch that the governor marveled greatly."

6. *They were to cast lots upon Christ's vesture.* David says, " They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." And Luke, in describing the scene on Calvary, says, that Jesus in the agonies of death exclaimed, " Father forgive them ; for they know not what they do : And they parted his raiment and cast lots."

7. *Christ was to be "numbered with the transgressors."* Isaiah liii: 12—" Then were there two thieves crucified with him ; one on the right hand and another on the left." Math. xxvii: 38. Here we see how clearly this prediction was fulfilled.

8. *There was not to be "a bone of him broken."* Psalms, xxxiv: 20. John, who was an eye-witness, and faithful servant of Jesus, says, " The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath

day (for that Sabbath day was a high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they brake not his legs."

9. *The manner of Christ's burial was also foretold.* "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Isaiah liii. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which had been hewn out in the rock." Math. xxvii: 10. Jesus himself declared that he would rise the third day. John ii: 19. On the third morning, therefore, those devoted and beloved women that had been last to leave our Saviour, found their way to the sepulchre, and when they arrived the resurrection had taken place; but they saw "the angel of the Lord" that "answered and said unto them, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

We have now briefly passed over some of the most important prophecies concerning our Saviour, and also

noticed their fulfillment, and now ask the candid reader to examine for himself and ask the question (for reason and common sense to answer), could the Jews, or anyone else, since the time of our Saviour, help acknowledging Him as the "*very Christ*," without doing it ignorantly or wilfully? How can such testimony be gainsaid? And how ignorant of the Scriptures must a man be to reject Him and look for another! But strange as these things may seem, these very people who had the writings of "Moses and the prophets," and who were anxiously awaiting a deliverer, refused to own Him as their Saviour! "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and *his own* received him not." But when Pilate was willing to release Jesus unto them, they cried out in a tumult, "Crucify him, crucify him." And "when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: See ye to it." "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

We have made the above quotations in order to show the manner in which the Jews rejected our Saviour. It is evident that their pride kept them, in this instance, from doing what their judgment convinced them that they should do. If our Saviour had descended from glory in a chariot of fire, demolished earthly kingdoms, and rode in triumph through the earth, then would they have embraced Him and

humbled themselves before Him. But because He came as an humble babe of Bethlehem they cast Him off—refusing to embrace Him as the Messiah. And when they had witnessed His miracles, they were astonished and confounded, but still their proud hearts refused to own Him. Hence they closed their eyes, refusing to see; stopped their ears, unwilling to hear; hardened their hearts, lest they should be convinced, and thus blindly and wilfully cast Him from them, crying, “Away with him;” “Crucify him!” Strange as this course may seem to us at the present time, we have many among us that act upon precisely the same principle. If religion went in pomp and splendor, with golden slippers and silken gloves, speaking honeyed words with buttered tongue, through velvet lips, and exalting men to high earthly honors, they would then gladly, and of their own choice, be Christians! But when it demands an humble heart and godly walk, asks, “that all men shall be equal,” and act in unison, as followers of Christ, they demur, and say by their actions, as the Jews said of Christ, “Away with religion” for this time, “when we have a convenient season” we will think more about it.

May God help us to be wise unto salvation, knowing that there is no salvation out of Christ. May we embrace Him, love Him, honor and obey Him, that we may be eternally saved with Him. Amen.

"IF."

By Rev. T. J. OGBURN,

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"And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die! If we say, we will go into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here we die also. Now therefore come and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." II KINGS vii: 3, 4.

Parallel passages—ESTHER iv: 16, and JONAH iii: 9.

These scriptures suggest and illustrate the necessity, wisdom and duty of sometimes accepting and acting upon very unsatisfactory evidence, evidence amounting to only a bare possibility, and of deciding positively under even painful uncertainty. There are, here and there, persons predisposed to religious doubt, who are naturally skeptical as to God and all revealed truth, and who would excuse themselves from the demands of Christianity upon their service, and who suppose they can with impunity ignore all its claims, because a kind of uncertainty and unreality attaches to religious things; because their truth is not capable of mathematical demonstration, and because doubts may be entertained concerning them. Now we believe this assumed attitude of indifference and irresponsibility as to religious things, the evidence of the truth and reality of which is not to every mind obvious and unmistakable, is utterly unreasonable and unlike men's conduct in what are called life's practical affairs. To almost every business undertaking there attaches more or less uncertainty as to its success and propriety; and almost

every such enterprise is, indeed, a venture. And in many cases to refuse to venture, painful as is the doubt and unpromising as are the appearances, would be criminal. Says Bishop Butler, “To us, probability is the very guide of life. In matters of practice, it (probable evidence) will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation, in point of prudence and of interest, to act upon presumption or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth. For surely a man is as really bound in prudence to do what, upon the whole, according to the best of his judgment, appears to be for his happiness as what he certainly knows to be.

* * * Numberless instances might be mentioned respecting the common pursuits of life where a man would be thought, in a literal sense, distracted, who would not act, and with great application too, not only upon an even chance, but upon much less, and where the probability or chance was greatly against his succeeding.” The conduct of the poor lepers in the text is manifestly wise. Their condition was desperate. They *must* die unless they go into the enemy’s camp; there they could but die, and they *might live*. Could Aristotle, or Locke, or Bacon, have reasoned better? Thus, often, in utter desperation and under compulsion to do a rash thing or die, a kind of fool-hardiness proves to be the highest wisdom. It was so in the case of Esther, who, with no encouragement and “not according to the law,” with her life in her hand, went in before the King to avert the impending doom of herself and her people. “If I

perish, I perish." Nor were the Ninevites unreasonable in repenting and crying mightily unto God, although with no assurance that He would hear them, but only the bare possibility, "*Who can tell if God will repent and turn himself from his fierce anger that we perish not?*" True, in neither case above cited did the actors know they would succeed. But it is just as true they did not know they would not. Upon this ground of uncertainty does the agnostic stand—uncertainty as to supernatural things. He neither affirms nor denies. He says these things are neither provable nor disprovable; they are to us unknowable. Yet because, as he thinks, the revelations of Christianity are not demonstrably true, not capable of positive proof, therefore he may utterly disregard its claims, and with the snap of his finger toss away from his consideration the sublimest questions of life. Though, like Athenians, to whom God was "the unknown," he is not, like them, "too superstitious"; for to this "unknown God" he has neither altar nor inscription.

Not infrequently some flippant unbeliever asks, who knows that there is a God; that the Bible is true, and that there is a future life of bliss or woe according to our conduct here? I would ask, does he know there is no God? "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God;" but his saying so does not make it so. Nor does one's attitude towards any question affect that question. It may, and often does, affect him. Men once doubted the existence of this continent. But it was here all the same, a vast out-

stretch of country, with its fertile plains and towering mountains, and the thundering cataracts and untold mineral wealth, and infinitely varied and abundant resources sufficient to support in magnificent splendor the mightiest nation that ever peopled any country, nor did it ever shrink an inch from its natural proportions to accommodate those who doubted its existence. Facts are very unaccommodating things. Real facts are absolutely independent. They do not change for anything. I suppose that even Omnipotence could not affect a fact. You "do not *believe* there is any God." Do you *know* there is none? Have you philosophically demonstrated the impossibility of His existence? Have you positive evidence of His non-existence? Do you know all that can be known upon this subject? Have you searched the universe through and through, and do you now return with certain assurance that this vast and orderly system has no maker, no ruler? "Canst thou by searching find out (no) God?" You "do not believe the Bible can be proven true?" Can you prove it untrue? Do you know there is no hereafter, nor heaven, nor hell? Are you quite sure that the Gospels are a forgery, that Jesus is a myth and Christianity a farce? And have you named your boys Paine and Voltaire and Rousseau, and do you teach them your skeptical principles? Unless very immodest, you must admit that you *may* mistake; that *possibly*, that grand religious system whose "leading tenets are held by every university of eminent repute in Europe and America," many of

whose professedly revealed truths could not have been humanly originated nor discovered by reason, and which cannot be improved upon nor rendered obsolete nor superseded; that system whose name has become a synonym for civilization, and which has organized and munificently endowed the great charities of the world; which is in favor with a large majority of the ripest scholars of this century, and to the propagation of which Christian men have consecrated millions of their wealth, and whose doctrines have raised the fallen, reclaimed the vicious, comforted the sorrowing, inspired the living and soothed the dying. I say, you must admit that this system called Christianity *may* be true. How unreasonable, then, is your position of determined indifference to the requirements of Christianity because you do not *know* it to be true, while on the other hand, you cannot know it to be false! How rash to act exactly as *if it were* false, because it *may* be false, rather than act as *if it were* true, because it *may* be true. Why risk what may be your supreme and everlasting well-being upon what may prove the fatal side of an uncertainty! Consider religion first, as affecting *this* life only. If "man was made to glorify God and enjoy him forever;" if "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that *now is*;" if even temporal good "be added unto those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" if "all things work together for good to them that love God;" if "faith is a living power from God," the natural exercise of our highest facul-

ties and the grandest inspiration to noble endeavors; if men “through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises and out of weakness were made strong;” if “this is the victory that overcometh the (present, natural) world, even faith” in the eternal, supernatural world, and if the Christian religion is humanity’s great essential and richest experience and crowning glory—then how fearful the immediate loss befalling the ungodly, unbelieving, irreligious man! Nor is this loss offset by any profit accruing to the sinner from his prayerlessness, profanity and other worldliness. By these very things he forfeits the *now*, if not the *hereafter*—this present world, if not that which is to come. This sad cry of the worldly-minded man, after he has tried all earth has to offer, must be, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” And his heart must be

“An aching void,
The world can never fill.”

But how much greater does the mistake appear when viewed in the light of eternity, if there be to us an eternity! O, if there be a God, and if Jesus Christ be His son and our Saviour, and if the Bible be God’s word, and if it be a crime to disobey God and reject His son and disbelieve His word; and if our conduct here shall determine our condition in the life to come! If the heaven of God shall be the everlasting home of His faithful children, and the hell of demons be the prison-house of the disobedient, then how awful a mistake is a life of irreverence and practical

atheism! A mistake incomparably greater than we can believe the opposite could be even were Christianity untrue. Why not risk erring on the safe side of this, to you, doubtful question? And why not presume upon the higher hypothesis of man's spiritual and immortal nature, rather than upon the lower and debasing one that he is "like the brutes that perish;" especially, when to act on this lower one is the only possible dangerous course? For if man is only a highly endowed intellectual animal with no future life awaiting the close of this, then there can be no *post-mortem* consequences of this life, whether well or ill spent. But should the sequel prove man's immortality and future rewardableness true, and no one knows that it may not, then piety assumes an infinite importance no wise man may disregard.

In view of man's ignorance of the subjects of revelation, and of the vast interests *possibly* involved, it is quite plain that the only attitude becoming even the most intelligent and least religious skeptic is one of cautious, reverent inquiry—"a serious, practical apprehension that Christianity *may* be true—an awful solicitude about religion, whether natural or revealed, such as to turn men's eyes to every degree of new light which may be had, from whatever side it comes; and to induce them to refrain, in the meantime, from all immoralities and live in the conscientious practice of every common virtue. Especially are they bound to keep at the greatest distance from all dissolute profaneness, for this the nature of the case forbids; and to treat with highest reverence a

matter upon which their own whole interest and being depend.” The sneer of ridicule and the cavil of the lighthearted are out of place here. Laughter here is “the laughter of fools.” Questions of life and death, of serious and eternal interests, are now considering. “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,” poor agnostic, “the place whereon thou standest (*may be*) holy ground.” Bare your brow and open your heart and lift your eyes to the self-revealing God. Walk toward the light, be it ever so dim. *Pray! Yes, pray!* If not with confidence then in despair, as did the dying atheist, “*If there be any God, I pray that He may have mercy on my soul!*” Say in your heart “To whom shall we go?” In utter desperation commit yourself, your soul, your *all*, to even the “unknown God.” What else *can* you do? Where else *can* you go? Go ask the infidel what boon *he* brings us, what balm “for aching hearts *he* can reveal.”

Do you say, “I have no faith.” You had better go without faith than never go at all. Have you the sincere desire to know God and to do His blessed will? Then to you He will give the faith, and He says, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” Come and see. Prove Him. You may *know* “that *He* is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him.”

“I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I shall forever die.”

DARK DAYS—MAN'S VIEW AND GOD'S VIEW OF CALAMITIES.

By Rev. JESSE H. PAGE,
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"All these things are against me." GENESIS lxii: 36.

The incidents given in the Bible of the lives of Jacob and his twelve sons will never cease to stir the minds and hearts of the thoughtful to their profoundest depths. The varied experiences through which they were called to pass, and their bearing under them, are delineated so clearly and in a manner so true to nature as to make us feel that the ties of kinship that bind us to them are very close, and that when we study their lives we are holding communion, not with imaginary characters, but with beings in actual life.

Jacob and Simeon, Judah, Joseph and Benjamin were men "subject to like passions as we are," and also capable of the same joys and sorrows.

Subject: Man's view and God's view of what are called calamities of this life.

It is said that calamities always come in *groups*—never *singly*. This is illustrated in the case of Job. In the midst of great prosperity, described by himself, 29th chapter, 2d to 23d verses—"In the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head," etc.—evil tidings came to him from all quarters and in rapid succession :

1. "The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; Yea, and they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword." Job i: 14, 15.

2. "While he was yet speaking," another comes with the news that "The fire of God is fallen from heaven (lightning) and hath burned up the sheep and servants, and consumed them." i: 16.

3. "While he was yet speaking," another messenger comes with the news that "The Chaldeans made out three bands and fell upon the camels and carried them away, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword."

4. "While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness (cyclone), and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead." i: 18, 19.

5. Before he had time to recover from the shock, he himself is afflicted with a dreadful disease—painful and loathsome, and of long duration; and

6. *Worse than all*, the only one left to whom he could look for comfort and strength proves faithless in this his hour of trial, and chides him for his constant trust in God: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." ii : 9.

"Nothing," says a writer, "makes the ungodly so angry as to see the godly under trial not angry."

I. In the case of Jacob, "all these things" formed what he regarded a *combination of adversities*:

1. There was a grievous famine throughout the land in which he lived. "The heaven was brass overhead and the earth underneath was iron." Deut. xxviii: 23. The question of bread was a serious one, and great suffering, if not *actual starvation*, seemed inevitable. How grateful should we be who are blessed with such bountiful supplies!

2. *The evil conduct of his sons*, most of them, was a source of constant grief. All parents are vitally affected by the deportment of their children. "Seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life" is applicable to many parents besides Jacob. "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him." Prov. xvii: 25. "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach." Prov. xix: 26. Such were the sons of Jacob.

The old Mosaic law was extremely rigid in such cases: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father," etc., "all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die." Deut. xxi: 18-21. "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness." Prov. xx: 20. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. xxx: 17.

The other side. "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice." Prov. xxviii: 24. "I have no greater

joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." John iii: 4. Jacob's sons gave their father trouble.

3. The wounds produced by what to him for years was the tragic death of his favorite son, Joseph, had not been healed during the long period of twenty-two years. That torn and bloody coat—all that remained to him of his beloved boy—kept before his mind continually the soul-harrowing thought that "Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces and devoured by an evil beast." How could he suppress his grief while the memory of this terrible thing remained.

4. But the *climax of his troubles* was reached when Benjamin, the youngest, must be taken away. Simeon was held as a hostage—a prisoner—and could be released only when Benjamin should go as a proof of their statements respecting their father and his sons. His experience with his sons gave him good grounds of fear for the safety of his child. No wonder he shuddered at the very thought of seeing him go off with them. That was a trying ordeal through which the gray-haired patriarch was called to pass when he cried out in anguish of spirit, "Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me."

But the alternative was, Benjamin must go, or starvation must come. That was an honest declaration—he felt that "all these things were against him." It was a natural conclusion to reach, standing face to face with the present in the shadow of the bitter experience of the past. You and I, and all of

us, under similar circumstances, would feel and speak as he did.

II. *But there is another side to this picture.*

God, whose “thoughts are not our thoughts, and whose ways are not ours,” looked at all these things in an entirely different light, and designed the accomplishment of a grand and glorious purpose, which did not appear at all to one looking on from a human standpoint. His hand, unseen, was “making the wrath of man to praise Him,” and causing all these bitter experiences of His servants to “work together for their good.” Very soon the joyous news was brought to the grief-smitten patriarch, “Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” Joseph, for whom he had grieved as one dead for twenty-two years, yet alive! The news, he thought, was too good to be true. No wonder the sad heart of the old father fainted under the weight of joy. When assured by the long line of Egyptian wagons which his now highly honored son had sent to take him and his household from the famine-stricken land to one of plenty “his spirit revived,” and he gave utterance to his overflowing joy, “It is enough : Joseph my son is yet alive ; I will go and see him before I die. Gen., xlvi: 27, 28.

It is thus, brethren, with all God’s children under those experiences which we call adversities or calamities, sufferings, afflictions and bereavements. These things are not against us, as we imagine. None of these things “for the present seem to be joyous, but

grievous, nevertheless afterward (often very soon) they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised thereby.” Heb. xii:11. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Ps. xxx:5. How often when the clouds gather, when men may combine against us, and God seems to forsake us, do we feel and say with Jacob: “All these things are against me.” We should

“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

David, “in a great strait,” said, “Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.” 2 Sam. xxiv:14. But for the fact taught in the Bible that God controls all things and makes them “work together for good to them that love him,” we would sometimes sink into despondency and give up the struggle. But being assured that He can and does convert *evils* into *blessings*; that He “makes the wrath of man to praise him, and will restrain the remainder of wrath,” and “make even our enemies to be at peace with us,” let us “lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees,” and be “strong in the strength which God gives through his beloved Son.” Let us remember that while of ourselves we can do nothing, yet we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. “He hath said I will never leave thee nor fail thee.” “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore

will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." In this refuge let us find security and rest until the storms be overpast.

THE RICH FOOL.

BY REV. J. F. BUTT,

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"But God said unto him, Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God."—Luke xii: 20, 21.

There are many kinds of fools in the world, but the biggest fool of all is the rich fool.

Now we will assert right here that it is not necessary that riches shall absolutely cause a man to be irreligious, nor is it necessary that a man shall be poor in order to be good, although much the larger proportion of the best men in the world belong to the class who may be called poor, or who may be in moderate circumstances in life.

Then, on the other hand, a very small proportion of rich men in the world are noted for their liberality, or their zeal in working for the souls of their fellow-men, nor can there be selected from that class many who are noted for their deep piety, and we fully realize the truth of God's word found in Matt. xxiv: 28, "For wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together;" and Matt. vi: 21 and Luke xii: 34, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The observation and experience of one of the most celebrated divines, who was as well acquainted with the inhabitants of New York as any man in America, said, with its 1,700,000 inhabitants, he could count on his ten fingers every man there who was rich and a worker for Christ.

The fact is, in order to accumulate a large fortune it is absolutely necessary that no time should be taken up in anything except in deep and perpetual thought and labor and worldly wisdom in accumulation by the best of judgment and business sagacity, and investing so as to keep and increase what has been made. And it is a question not fully settled whether, by real honesty, any man can keep the golden rule and do unto others what he would have them do unto him and accumulate a large fortune.

As a large wealth coming to one man must necessarily deplete the possessions of another, and ten thousand dollars or more made by one man must be supplied from the pockets of the moderate in worldly possessions, extortion must be put in operation in order to satisfy the aspirations and avarice of the rich

and continually growing rich man. In fact, as a general rule, men grow rich by making and keeping others poorer.

The proprietors of factories, as a general thing, declare large dividends every six or twelve months, and have frequently to double the dimensions of their buildings; and wear purple and fine linen and dwell in palaces, and move in every respect in a lordly style. And all this has to come out of the hard earnings of women and children who are dependent on their situation to get not much more than the husks which hardly the swine would eat. The scantiest fare and the most constant economy keeps them just alive. May not such an one be said to be a rich fool? Great riches are not necessary to happiness, nor do large accumulations satisfy the cravings of an immortal soul. The fact is, any man who imagines that the soul, the breath of God in man, can satisfy itself with anything short of spiritual and religious food, is not wise, and is just as much a fool as the man spoken of in our text.

Now we will notice some of the misconceptions and follies of this man.

1. Talking to his soul and making a misrepresentation that led him into false and foolish decisions.

2. It was an untruth in saying that it was for many years. A man is sadly deceived when he persuades himself that he can live surely many days, when Job says our lives or days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and spent without hope.

The man who lived longer than any man other than himself, at the age of 969 years died and could

not have said that he would live many days, for that long life, in comparison to the never-ending ages of eternity is but as a grain of sand on the ocean shore in comparison to the many millions there.

But if it had been true that he could have lived many thousands of ages it would not have brought ease to him in this world, for rest and ease are nowhere to be found here, for the poet has inquired for it and asked,

“ Oh ! where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul,—
Not in ocean’s depths, or even between the poles,
For the world can never give the bliss for which we sigh.”

Oh ! how foolish it is, or was, in him to think that eating and drinking and being merry was satisfying the claims that God had on him in this state of probation or trial.

How fully satisfied he was, when it was too late, that he had made a woeful mistake. That in all his worldly prosperity he had made an unwise choice, and must leave it all, and that he would never see another day ; that another sun would never rise on him ; that he had had his good things in this life—by his own choice ; that this night would seal his everlasting destiny ; that soul and body must part—“ this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Days and nights of deep anxiety and industrious labor had crowned him with success such as the world admires. He was doubtless honored and respected and praised for what they call success. Oh ! how many times have we heard it said of such an one in

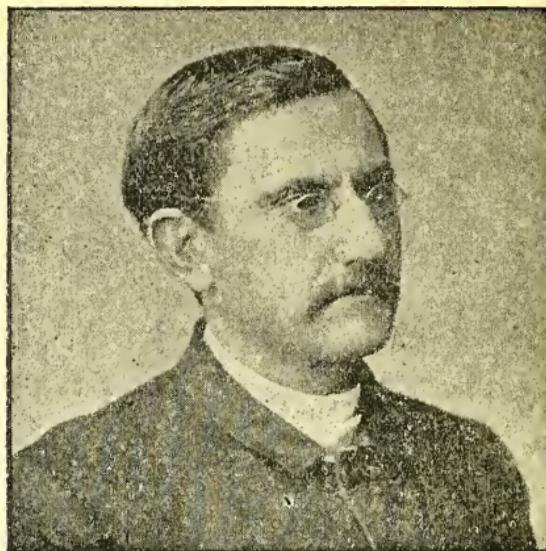
great praise, "He started on a few shillings; just see how he has succeeded—why could not I have been so fortunate?" I knew a man years ago who, by farming, got very rich—had a religious and pious wife—who was noted for his benevolence, even in the erection of a splendid church to which she belonged, and who was liberal, as the world would say, in feeding the poor from his table; at all the protracted meetings; but whose time was mostly taken up in making a splendid farm and in the erection of a magnificent residence. To all human appearances, he looked as if he might live many years to enjoy his large accumulations. He was worldly-wise, admired and honored far and near for his management. But although he attended all the services, in his fine carriage, to gratify his wife, he could not be induced to give his heart to God and be a Christian. When one of his servants was sick he gave personal attention in nursing, and in passing from his comfortable chamber at night to the apartment of the sick servant to see the medicine punctually administered he took cold, which settled on his lungs, and in a few days his soul and body was separated. It was said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He sent for his wife's pastor to converse with him, and said, in his dying hours, "Oh! Mr. S_____, if I had only been a poor man, I could have had time to prepare to die; but I am unready and unprepared to go. Oh! what a fool I have been—and there's none to dispute it!"

Then to whom were those things to belong which he had provided? He understood law, and long

before his death wrote his own will on many pages of foolscap; and though his legal knowledge would prevent any litigation, yet years and years passed away before it was settled, but not as was his anxious desire that it should be. So it will be with all of us who are laying up treasures for ourselves and are not rich toward God.

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. The man who dotes on long life and does not give his heart to God is a fool. The man who thinks he can be happy in worldly prosperity without religion is a fool. Fools, as we live only for self. Fools at death, when we remember what we have done in the neglect of the future. Fools when we stand at the throne of judgment and hear the dreadful sentence of "Depart, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We will know we have been fools, when in full sight of heaven we shall see and realize all the joys that others have, like Dives did Lazarus, and we cut off by a gulf between heaven and hell that can afford no beneficial communication between the inhabitants of the two conditions of souls.

And, in conclusion we will say, that through the endless cycles of eternity we will cry, fools! fools! fools! we have been in yonder world; like Judas, it would be better for us if we had never been born. I would rather be the most despised reptile that crawls on earth than to be unconverted and unsanctified on earth. There is not a reptile in hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God."



THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

By Rev. J. H. CORDON, D. D., pastor at Oxford,*
Of the North Carolina Conference (M. E. C., S.).

"Thy love to me was wonderful."—II SAMUEL i: 26.

These words formed a part of the most touching eulogium which the profoundest grief and finest genius ever uttered. On reading it, one is left in doubt of which art David was the greatest master, whether it was in the use of the pen, the harp, or the sword.

Jonathan found in him one worthy to preserve his memory and record his virtues, and David's genius has preserved these like fragrant spikenard in a box of alabaster, or, as I have seen, a drop of water shrined within the crystal walls of a precious stone.

* Died at Oxford, February, 1893.

It is due the Psalmist to remark that this noble panegyric does no less honor to his heart than to his head. Remember that the death of Saul has removed the only obstacle that stood between David and the throne, and had rid him of an enemy that had pursued him for some years with rancorous and unrelenting hatred. It is a common and a just saying that we should say no evil of the dead. They are not here to defend themselves. And, unless where great interests are involved, their ashes should not be disturbed. In his circumstances, the utmost required of David would have been to preserve a devout and becoming silence about Saul—burying all recollections of him in the grave. But he was incapable of this. He was cast in a finer mould; made of nobler metal. His generous heart, forgiving and forgetting every wrong, warmed at the recollections of those early happy days when the King drew the shepherd boy from obscurity, received him into the bosom of his family—and when, harp in hand, he threw the chain of music over Saul's stormy passions, bidding waves be still. David buries Saul's faults in the grave; he leaves the dross to lie undisturbed among the cold embers; he brings out the gold, the finer elements of Saul's character, and without imputing to him virtues he never possessed, he tells all the good of Saul he can, and crowns his memory with the honors due to a King—a kind-hearted father, and a man as brave as ever faced a foe. “From the blood of the slain”—he sings—“from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and

the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely in their lives and in their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions." But Jonathan is the grand subject of this beautiful lament—the principal figure in the canvas. In some respects Jonathan stands without a rival in all history, sacred or profane. Had we known him better we might have thought less of him, we would have found some fault in him, and that it was true of him, as of the best of fallen men, that the brightest sun is dimmed by spots; yet there is no fault recorded of Jonathan, and conferring on him more honor than on anyone else whose name stands in this sacred book, God has not left a stain to blot his memory. If there ever was friendship in this world, pure, unalloyed by any inferior metal, disinterested, free of envy, without any element of selfishness, incapable of harboring a suspicious thought, it had glowed in the bosom that now lay cold on Gilboa's lonely mountain. Battle spear never pierced such a generous heart, nor had war ever such a graceful victim offered on her blood-stained shrine. Men never possessed a friend such as David lost in Jonathan. If ever man loved a neighbor as he did himself, that man was Jonathan; and no one with a head and heart can read his tragic history without feeling that he was worthy of this extraordinary but not extravagant laudation, "Thy love to me was wonderful."

But who can read the words of my text without thinking of a greater than Jonathan? As we muse

on these words Gilboa vanishes and Calvary rises to view. The battle scene, with Jonathan standing like a lion at bay, or faint from loss of blood sinking beneath his wounds, shifts, and I see Jesus standing alone amid the impious crowd, or fainting beneath His cross in the streets of Jerusalem. The hill where, in the pale moonlight, all stiff and stark and bloody, Jonathan lies surrounded by heaps of dead, his face to heaven and his foot to the foe that have fallen before his arm, gives place to another scene. A tall cross tops the summit of Mount Calvary, and the sun's level beams shine on the drooping head and mangled, bloody form of the Son of God. To Him these words best belong. We hang the harp of David on that Cross, and Jonathan himself consenting, we take this garland from his brow to weave it into the crown of thorns, saying, as we turn to Jesus, "Thy love to me was wonderful."

I. *And the love of Christ to us is wonderful because there was nothing in us lovely.*

One law of our nature is, we cannot behold the beautiful without admiring it. Another is that so far as earthly objects are concerned, and apart from the beauty of holiness, we cannot help loving what is lovely, and regarding it with affection. Our affections are drawn to an attractive object as naturally as iron to a lodestone. God made us to love, and when brought near to such an object, our feelings entwine themselves around it as the soft and pliant tendrils of the vine do around the support it clothes with leaves and hangs with purple clusters.

Without detracting from Jonathan's merits, it must be owned that, however wonderful the love was he bestowed upon David, it was not bestowed on an unworthy object. One brave man loves another. In the old days of chivalry men honored courage in their enemies, loving and admiring bravery even when in arms against them. And it is not wonderful at all in the sense we are considering it that the soul of Jonathan was kind to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. They had much in common. In warlike achievements, in strong affections, in generosity of temper, in genuine piety, in courage that dared everything and was daunted by nothing, these brothers in arms answered to each other as face answereth to face in a glass, or as I have seen two bright drops of quicksilver when brought to touch each other run into one, so were Jonathan and David united. We turn now from them to Christ and ourselves, and what do we find in man to win the love of Calvary. The day that saw Jonathan's soul knit to David's, saw David in arms fighting his father's battles and saving his father's crown. We were in arms too, but it was against the right and against God's government; we were fighting too, but it was on the wrong side—rebels against God in the ranks of the devil. It is not enough to say there was nothing lovely in us, that as a holy God He saw nothing in us to love. Sin, that abominable thing which He hates, the seed and germ of all evil—a thing so hateful that it is said that He cannot look on it, had so pervaded the nature of

every individual man, and the whole race of men, that it necessitated God to abhor His own creatures. Do not be startled at the expression; I use no language stronger than I can justify. Look at a corpse, putrid, bloated, infecting all the air, every feature of humanity shockingly defaced, the bright eye, damask cheek, sweet lips, the lovely form changed into vilest loathsomeness, a banquet to worms, which, as they creep out and creep in, give a horrible life to death. Were the dearest, fondest object of our affections reduced to a state like that, how would we throw it shuddering from our embraces, and call in pity for a grave to bury our dead. This is a fair picture of the havoc sin hath made in creatures whom He made after His own image. The heavens are not clean in His sight; He charges the angels with folly. Should we wonder, then, that fallen man is abhorred in His sight? Just so soon as man, under the light of God's spirit, sees himself aright, he abhors himself—listen to one whose words will find an echo in every converted heart: "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

It is said that with all her baseness, her duplicity, her cruelty, the passions and crimes that have left an indelible stain on her memory, Queen Mary had much queenly grace. So perfect was her form, her face so beautiful, her smiles so winning, that it was only men cast in the stern mould of John Knox that could resist their witchery. But in sight of God's holiness, sin left us no attractiveness. There was

nothing but human misery to draw down divine mercy. Sin left nothing in man which it did not touch, and, like blow-flies, whatever it touched it tainted. The whole man was affected—head, heart, soul, reason, and affections, the imagination and the will. The deadly venom of the serpent's fang, like a subtle poison thrown into the circulation, was borne throughout all the frame. If it be true of all mankind that they are altogether become filthy, true that there is none that doeth good, no, not one, true that every imagination of man's heart is evil continually, then sin left us with nothing to engage, but everything to repel, the affections of a holy Saviour. Salvation, therefore, must be all grace, and the Saviour's love must have its meetest and majestic emblem in the sun of heaven. Sustained in the sky with no pillars that rest on the earth it hangs on nothing, and its bright beams, unlike the stone, the falling rain, the blazing, dying meteor, that fall to the earth by virtue of its attractions, are sent forth by a power within itself. So with love divine—the healing beams the Son of Righteousness—by His mercy He saves us, and in embracing, not the lovely but the loathesome, well may we transfer this eulogy to the love of Jesus. “Thy love to me was wonderful.”

II. The love of Christ to us is wonderful because there was nothing in us loving.

We love that which loves us. Such is our nature. Love sees its own face reflected in the heart of another as in water at the bottom of a well. We cannot

resist what loves us, it matters not who or what it is—though but the dog that barks and bounds and wheels in joyous circles around us on our return, the first to welcome and foremost to defend. I would hold his friendship cheap who did not love a dog who loved him, and care little for a child who would not drop some tears on the grave of his humble but faithful playmate. Let a poor dumb creature love us and we are drawn to it in return by a law of nature as irresistible and divine as that which draws a stone to the ground or makes the stream flow onward to the sea. Whatever secrets this fact may unlock, whatever strange and singular marriages it may explain, it does not open the mysteries of Calvary, it does not explain the love of Christ. I have, indeed, seen some that had abandoned themselves to a life of vice who still respected virtue, and looked back with remorseful regret to their days of childhood and the innocence of a father's home. I have seen a profligate son who though wringing a pious mother's heart and bringing her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, yet loved her. Mourning his own failings, he returned her affection; yielding to sin, still he clung to his mother as a drowning wretch to a piece of the wreck which he hopes may float him to the shore. Now, if our love of goodness had survived the loss of it, if we had retained any love to God after we had lost His image, if we had cast some lingering looks on Eden, and like Absalom felt pained at being two whole years in Jerusalem without being admitted into his father's presence; if we

had been grieved at God's displeasure, with some goodly vestiges of primeval innocence, Christ's love to us would not have been so wonderful. But there was no such feeling in man to awaken the love of Christ. Hateful man is by nature hating. I appeal to the unconverted: Do not your hearts prove that; and those who have been converted see it in the memory of those days, on which they now look back with horror, wondering how, when they were in arms against God, trampling on His laws, despising His mercy, scorning His grace, He should have borne with them as He did. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." "Herein is love indeed, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And what is graven deep in our hearts and written so legibly on the pages of the Bible, I see in still more affecting characters on the body of Him who sits throned in heaven. More than wounded for our transgressions, He was wounded by the hand of the transgressors. The nail prints on the hands that our Advocate holds up in prayer for us, and that scar on His side, were not the work of devils. Inflicted by the hands of men, they are the marks of a love that throws its arms around enemies; the unloving as well as the unlovely, hatred as well as loathesomeness. Oh! for such love, let the shining throngs that stand before Him with crowns of glory and in the white robes of victors join the church on earth and weave these words into the anthems of the skies, "Thy love to us was wonderful."

III. This love is wonderful in its expression.

"Art thou in health, my brother?" was the way in which Joab saluted Amasa as he took him by the beard to kiss him, and the last words had not left his lips when he stabbed him to the heart. Smiting him under the fifth rib he passed on; but not so with the people who followed Joab to battle. The sight arrested their attention, and they stood in gathering crowds gazing with surprise and horror upon Amasa, as victim of the basest cruelty he wallowed in his blood on the highway. Any dead body lying on the street would gather a crowd around it and stay the steps of the passers by. Exclamations of pity, of horror and dismay would break from many lips, while the question would pass from person to person, How did it happen? Who is he? Where did he live? Who are his friends? How would it move us, move the roughest among men, to see some trembling, bent, gray old man or distracted mother rush through the throng and fling themselves on the body with a shriek, a wild piercing cry, "Oh, my son! my beloved son! would I had died for thee, my son, my son!" That stays the foot of man; but a sight is here that might have stayed an angel's wing and filled both heaven and earth with wonder. Who is this? Hear, oh heavens, and be astonished, oh earth! By the cross, where He died, the ear of faith catches the voice of the Eternal: "This is my beloved Son." He, then, who is buffeted by cruel hands and meekly bears the blows; who faints from loss of blood and sinks beneath His cross; who hangs upon the tree

while the blood streams from His hands and feet; whose dying ear is filled, not with holy prayers, but with the shouts and mockery of an impious crew—He, hanging mangled and lifeless on the middle cross, with head dropped on His breast, the palor of death spread over His cheek, the seal of death on His lips, the film of death on His eyes, is the Son of God! The Prince of Life has become the prey of death—at once its noblest victim and Almighty Conqueror. How did it happen? One word conveys the answer. That word is love, love to sinners, to the greatest, guiltiest sinners. Love brought Him from the skies. Love made Mary His mother. Love shut Him in Joseph's tomb. Love wove the cords that bound His hands. Love forged the nails that fastened Him to the cross. Love wept in His tears, breathed in His sighs, spake in His groans, flowed in His blood and died upon His cross. Oh! it is impossible to stand beside that cross, with its noble, bleeding, divine burden, and not address that dear, sacred body, saying: Thy love to me, a poor sinner, an ill-doing and hell-deserving sinner, a guilty and graceless, a hating and hateful sinner, was wonderful, passing the love of women, passing the love of angels, passing any tongue to tell, passing figures to illustrate or fancy to imagine, thought to measure or eternity itself to praise. There is a custom in the East for one man to express his friendship for another by presenting him with rich and costly vestments, by taking his own robe and putting it on him. I have seen it related how the Emperor of France having marked the dauntless bravery of a soldier in the

very thick and whirlwind of the fight, took his own Cross of the Legion of Honor, and in the enthusiasm of his admiration fixed it upon the brave man's breast. In harmony with such custom, the Scripture tell us that Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, even to his sword, his bow and his girdle. And when that shepherd boy, having doffed his homely attire, now stands before the court and camp and king appareled as a prince we have a faint image of what Jesus does for us. The Son of God denuded Himself of His visible glory, and, as it were, exchanged vestments with us. Taking our nature, He put on our shame that He might apparel us in His glory. What an exchange!

Oh, yes, my brother, with a crown of thorns He purchases for us an immortal crown, and ascends the cross that we might ascend the skies. In illustration, also, of the love of Jonathan we are told that he said to David, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth I will do for thee." The very language Christ addresses to His people. He cannot withhold anything from those who love Him. How can He? It were unreasonable to believe it. If He never said to any of the sons of men seek ye my face in vain, will he not give us all needed blessings. Nor has He promised anything where He lacks either the will or the ability to do. Jonathan's was a large and loving-hearted promise, but alas! the day came when the heart that loved and the hand that would have helped David were cold in death. "Thy love to me

was wonderful." Bitter thought—it was a thing in the past—a sacred memory! No more. The arrows of the Philistine had drunk up that love. The iron mace of war had shattered that fountain. It lay empty and dry. The ear into which David had oftentimes poured his sorrow was heavy in death. The heart that loved him had ceased to beat. Jonathan was gone—dead and gone—and all that was left was the memory of joys, never, never to return. He should see his face no more. So he flung himself on his bloody grave crying, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, the beauty of Israel is slain on his high places. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women!"

How much happier the circumstances the lover of Jesus. He is no broken cistern, but a fountain, ever full and flowing. His name, "I am he that liveth and was dead." The angels guard an empty tomb and dry up the woman's tears, saying, "He is not here—He is risen." From the Cross that held Him, and the sepulchre that tombed Him, we rise in imagination to follow his track along the starry skies, onward to the gate of heaven, and still on and still up, thro' lines of shouting angels, to the Throne of the Eternal. He is there now, and changing the tense, as we behold Him forgiving our daily sins, supplying our daily wants, pouring down daily blessings on our heads, we say not Thy love to me was, but Thy love to me *is* wonderful. And never till we ourselves have passed in at heaven's gate and behold its lofty thrones and shining ones, the glory

which Jesus has with the Father and shares with His brethren; never, till the palm of victory is in our own hands, and blood-bought crown is on our own heads; never, till we walk the streets that are paved with gold, and join the songs that are as the noise of many waters, shall we sufficiently understand what we owe to the love of Christ. How justly we may address to Him these words, "Thy love to me was wonderful."

"Oh for such love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
Their Saviour's praises speak!

Angels, assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold—
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told!"

THE DUTY AND DESTINY OF THE CHURCH.

BY REV. F. L. REID, D. D.,
Editor Raleigh Christian Advocate.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Matt. v: 13.
"That He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians v: 27.

The theme to which we propose calling your attention is *the duty and destiny of the church*.

The duty of the church is clearly set forth in the first text, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and the destiny of the church is embodied in the second text,

"That He might present it unto Himself," etc. So that taking the two together, we have the theme announced for the hour. The church, figuratively speaking, is God in the world—in other words God manifests Himself to the world through the church. It is true that a God is manifest in Nature. When we open the great volume of Nature we learn something of a God, see Him lifting Himself up in the majestic mountains, whose tops tower towards the heavens as if to furnish a path through the skies; we may see Him as He makes of the storm-cloud a chariot and comes thundering down to earth upon wheels of wind, flashing the lightnings of heaven across His pathway; we may take the astronomer's glass and scan the crystal skies, shining to His praise, and catch a glimpse of God in every rolling orb and flashing star.

"The restless globe of golden light
Whose beams create our days,
May join the silver queen of night
And chant J^e rovah's praise.

While monsters sporting on the flood,
In scaly silver shine,
Speak terribly their maker God,
And lash the foaming brine."

But with all these manifestations of God's grandeur and power, man would have forever wandered into infidelity and idolatry if God had not revealed Himself through His church. "The surging seas, in their eternal roar, might forever shout to the Lord," the shrill birds might forever raise His honors high as

they climb the morning sky, every dew-drop might flash the light of His countenance forever, every flower might breathe the odor of His precious name, every zephyr might whisper it through the trees, and with all these grand and beautiful manifestations of God's power man would forever wander in darkness, ignorant of the essential character of the Almighty. Man could have learned something of God's power in Nature, but if God had not manifested Himself as He has in and through His church man would never have known God aright, "whom to know aright is life eternal." Hence the remark that God manifests Himself to the world through the church. God made the world for the church and He made the church for the world. It was no accident that the world was made, nor was it any accident that the church was founded in the world.

God made the world beautiful, pure and holy, man robbed it of much of its beauty and brought the curse of sin upon it; then God made the church to save the world, and in this sense the church is the salt of the earth, it has the saving property. The great object of the church is *to save*, it is the salt that seasons and saves—it must not only save, but it must season, so to speak—it must give tone and flavor and taste.

I remark first, then, that in order that the church may be the salt of the earth it must have the savor. Or, in other words, in order to accomplish its mission in the world, the church must give a practical illustration of what it teaches in the lives of its members—

the salt, in order to season and save, must have the seasoning and saving quality—it must have its savor; if it have not the savor it is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.

The world will never believe that the church can make men holy and happy until it sees the church do it. The church may profess to do it, but just as long as its members fail to be holy and happy, just so long will the world refuse to believe that the church can do it. A physician may profess to be able to cure a certain disease, and he may advertise that he can do it, but the quickest way in the world to make people believe what he says is to cure the disease, then he gives unmistakable evidence that he can do what he says he can. The same principle applies to the church. The best way to make sinners believe that there is a reality in our religion is to show that there is in our daily lives. It is hard to make the world believe that the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ will make a man pure and pious as long as men who profess to have it indulge in all kinds of sinful, worldly amusements. It is hard to make the world believe that religion will keep a man from drinking liquor as long as men who profess to have it go into bar-rooms and drink. It is hard to get the world to believe what the Bible teaches in reference to the training of children, until Christian parents train their children properly. It is difficult to make the world believe that our religion makes a man honest and upright, while members of the church

cheat and defraud, and "take short cuts," as the world terms it. In a word, the great thought I wish to impress is this: If the church ever saves the world, it must first show the world that is saved itself. In my judgment, the greatest hindrance to the progress of Christianity to-day is the want of consistency and consecration on the part of the great majority of professing Christians. The preachers may preach with the power of an angel, but if they and the people do not practice the principles of the gospel it will never prevail.

In view of these facts, the great and most serious question for us to consider is this: Is the church prepared to accomplish its work in the world? Has the salt the savor? Has the church purity of heart and piety of life sufficient for the conquests that God designed it to make? And a still more practical, searching, personal question for each one of us to make is this: Am I prepared, by a pure heart and a pious life, to do my part of the great work God has given His church to do? Here is the great starting point. Until the church has this purity of heart and piety of life in its membership, it cannot be the salt of the earth; but, having it, it is prepared for its great work, which is:

To save the world from civil ruin. The church has a great deal more to do in influencing civil affairs than most people imagine. This nation, and every other civilized nation, owes the greater part of its civilization to the influence of the church. The church is the salt of the earth, in a civil sense. Why,

you just take the church and all religious influences out of the country, and what would it be? Just take all the influence of our holy religion out of a town, and what would it be? In two years you couldn't get even a respectable sinner to live in such a place. That sinner who scoffs at the church and refuses to support the gospel, owes the safety of his own life and property to the influence of the church on civil affairs. Even ten righteous men would have saved the wicked city of Sodom. Who knows how many severe judgments the righteous people of the country have averted? There is wickedness enough in the civil life of this land to crush it, and who knows but that God has spared it because of the righteous men and women in it?

But the main point I wish to impress under this head is, that the church ought to exert its influence to work a reformation in civil affairs. Just at this time it is greatly needed. Now, I do not believe in involving the church in partisan politics. I think the church ought to keep entirely aloof from partisan political entanglements. At the same time, I do think the influence of the religion of Jesus Christ ought to be felt in all our civil affairs; that it ought to permeate and shape all our public concerns. It ought to be the salt that seasons our civil life and saves us from civil ruin. I repeat, such an influence is greatly needed. It is enough to make the heart of a good man sick to look upon the condition of civil affairs in this country. Nihilism, communism, and many other pernicious isms are prevalent. There

is a spirit of unrest, disquietude and discontent, which seems to foreshadow some great change. Public feeling is about to cut loose from its old fastenings and, without any well defined plans, is seeking something new and different. The political ties that have bound men together heretofore are weakening. Men have less respect for law and government than formerly, and all this presages great good, or it presages great evil. Which it will be, in my opinion, depends upon the influence which the church exerts upon our civil life; and the great question of the hour is, Has the church sufficient moral and religious influence to save the country from civil ruin? Mere intellectual culture will not do it; mere legislation will not cure our ills. It is useless to expect intellectual culture or legislation to cure our ills. These have their uses and are important, but work no change in the moral character of men. We need more than intellectual culture or worldly legislation—we need moral training, religious influence, the observance and administration of sound moral law, the exercise of healthful, moral discipline in our churches in regard to both preachers and people. In the great struggle now going on in the world between truth and error, the powers of light and the powers of darkness, the lines between the contending forces should be distinctly and clearly drawn, and every one put in his true position. Let those who are on the Lord's side be drawn in battle array. Let all who are disloyal in heart and life to Christ be put where they belong, and let a purged, purified church permeate our civil

life with a sound, healthful, moral influence, centering all our culture in Christ, and basing all our legislation on the great law of love laid down in His life. Thus the church may be the salt of our civil life that will save us from impending ruin as a nation.

Again, the church must save us from social ruin. We certainly need something to save us from social ruin. The foundations of our social fabric are being shaken. Society is filled with giant evils that threaten its destruction. Intemperance threatens to crush the very life out of American society. Our fair young ladies are too often the companions of drunkards. It is too frequently the case that when our fair daughters are led as blushing brides to the matrimonial altar, they have there fixed upon them the stigma and misery of being a drunkard's wife. In almost every home of the land is a victim of intemperance. It stalks, like a great monster, through our land despoiling happy homes, crushing hearts into hopelessness, beggaring thousands of our children, and burying 60,000 of our once noble men in drunkards' graves every year.

The various familiar figures of the modern dance are about to drive all modesty out of society. There is enough fornication and adultery in this land to crush society. In almost every newspaper you pick up you read of some poor woman's ruin. Bad men and fast women, in some sections, are inaugurating a system of free-love-ism, and so-called woman's rights, that threaten great evil to our social life.

Society lets the seducer pass current in its circles, and asks only of the man who knocks at its door, "How much is he worth?" In social circles dollars pass for more than brains, or character, or culture. It is only here and there that we can find remnants of the old-time refined, cultured, social life. Coarseness and vulgarity are prevalent and popular. We need a reformation. We need an influence to check all this looseness and lasciviousness in society. The church of God must come to the rescue. The church must breathe upon all this impurity a purer atmosphere; it must hold up a higher type of manhood and womanhood. The church of God must take hold of society and drive out all these drunkards and slanderers and adulterers and adulteresses and fornicators, and raise the standard of social life higher, and teach men and women to be purer and more refined and elevated in their thoughts, feelings, words and actions. Society needs purifying. There is no use to try to conceal the fact. You know it, and I know it. Unless the church does it, it will not be done. Here is a great work for the church to do. In this way the church may prove to be the salt of our social life, and may save us from impending social ruin.

I remark, in the next place, that *the church must save the world from spiritual ruin*. So far we have been considering the work of the church as it affects us in our temporal welfare, but the great and grand work of the church is to save the world from spiritual ruin. If it stops short of this, it is a great failure. The last

message that fell from the lips of the ascending Lord to the church, gathered at His feet, was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." In this is embodied the great duty of the church. It was to go into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem. Are we doing this? Are we beginning even at Jerusalem? Are we doing this work at home? Men and women are dying and going to hell right around us every day. Are we making proper efforts to save them? In many of your homes, sitting at your own fireside and by your own dining-table, are men and women on the road to an eternal hell, some of them are your own children, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, and yet you have never spoken to them on the subject of personal religion; never made a personal effort for their salvation; never called them around a family altar for prayer; never an effort to save your own household. There is great need for the beginning of this great work at home.

We must begin at home, but we cannot stop there. The charity that begins and remains at home is no charity at all. In connection with these efforts to save those right around us, the church must gird itself for the conquest of the world. The world is open. All the church has to do now is to march in and conquer. In the last fifty years the church has made rapid strides toward spreading the gospel throughout the world. Fifty years ago missionary societies and missionary operations were few and weak, now they are a power felt all over the world. Fifty years ago two-thirds or three-fourths of the pop-

ulation of the earth were closed against the missionaries of the cross, now the world is open, and missionaries and missionary stations may be numbered by the tens of thousands, and the Bible is translated and read in hundreds of languages. The English language and English literature are being carried to almost every nation on earth, and the British, Foreign and American Bible Societies, like the Apocalyptic angel, are flying through the earth bearing the everlasting gospel to a lost and ruined race. God is using all these modern improvements and increased facilities for intercommunication for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of souls; and if the church will only rise up in all its strength and God-given power and push its great work, e'er long the shout will be heard in heaven and on earth: "Alleluiah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." Then will the church be prepared for its final grand destiny, as intimated in our second text: "That he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The church is to have this grand triumph sooner or later. I know not when, but it will come. Bishop Marvin, in one of his sermons, says he thinks the church is now in its infancy—that God has a grand career, extending through many years yet, for His church. He does not think that God would take four thousand years in which to prepare the church

for the coming of Christ, and give it only a little over two thousand years to enjoy the fruits of His coming. I know not how this may be, and nobody else, not even the angels in heaven know about it. These men that are telling so glibly when the end of the world will come know nothing about it, and only make themselves ridiculous when they claim to know such things. But we do know that the church will conquer the world for Christ, and that He will some day present it to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Oh! what a grand destiny! A glorious church to be presented to a more glorious God! A glorious church! Glorious in achievement! It is enough to make the heart of the Christian swell with a laudable pride when he studies the history of the church and sees what it has already accomplished in the world. When he begins and reads of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Joseph, of the Israelites, of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of Paul and Peter and John; of James and Stephen, and the martyrs of the past; of heroes of the sixteenth century, and on down to the present, what a glorious record he finds, and how it stirs his heart! With what stately steppings has God moved in the history of the church!

But the achievements of the church are to be more glorious and grander still. God is pushing His church out into the heathen world and pressing the conflict everywhere. The almost miraculous progress of missionary work is the wonder of this age. Ere long a band of missionaries will come from the

Eastern world and hang China, and Japan, and Hindoostan and the remainder of Asia as a trophy upon the cross of Christ ; and another band will soon come and hang Egypt, and Ethiopia, and Liberia, and Guinea, and the remainder of Africa as a trophy upon the cross ; another band will come and hang Greece, and cruel Turkey, and down-trodden Ireland, and Rome-cursed Italy, and the remainder of Europe as a trophy upon the cross ; still another band of missionaries will bring Brazil, and Venezuela, and the remainder of South America, and another band will bring the West Indies, and Mexico, and all North America, and yet another band will bring Oceanica, and all the Isles of the Sea as trophies to the cross, and then the work of the church militant will be complete, and all the inhabitants of North and South America, and of Europe, and Asia, and Africa, and Oceanica will join in earth's last grand doxology, and the Son of God shall spread His blessed hands and pronounce the last benediction upon earth's assembled multitude, and the Apocalyptic angel, taking his position in the sun, shall cry with a loud voice : "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the Great God." The church militant will then be changed into the church triumphant, and the grand presentation spoken of in the text will be made. Brethren, that will be a grand presentation day ! It was a grand day when God, by a word, made this beautiful earth and flashed light into it and flung it into its orbit and sent it on its great mission ; it was a grand day when in the midst of fire and smoke

and cloud and thunder and lightning God came down upon the mount and gave His law to man ; it was a grand day when the angels chanted the natal song and shepherds worshiped and wise men bowed before the infant Redeemer ; it was a grand sad day when from Calvary's cross came the cry, "It is finished!" as the cloud which had hung over Sinai floated around o'er Calvary's mount and "burst into a shower of the Saviour's tears ;" it was a grand day when He led them out as far as Bethany and ascended in triumph to enter the opening gates and doors of the celestial city, His work of redemption complete, but it will be a still grander day than all these when the last battle of the cross has been fought, the world brought to Christ, and the glorified church, having conquered the world, comes with its trophies to be presented, without spot or wrinkle, to the blessed Son of God, as the grand results of His death and resurrection. This is the day for which all other days were made.

In imagination, I can see the hosts of the redeemed gathering about the great white Throne. Abraham and all the Old Testament worthies are there, and all the faithful from the time of Adam down to the last syllable of time. They are clothed in garments of white, with crowns of rejoicing upon their brows, and golden harps suspended on their arms, and palms of victory in their hands. What a mighty throng ! They are perfectly tremulous with joy. I would like to get near enough to hear what they are saying. Poor old afflicted Jacob, from whose wearied heart

here was wrung the cry, "All these things are against me," has changed his tone and now exclaims, "All these things are for me"; Job now really knows that his Redeemer liveth; Jeremiah's lamentations have been turned into songs of rejoicing; David's plaintive strains are changed to gladsome hallelujahs; Paul still triumphantly shouts, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory"; John Wesley now realizes that "the best of all is God is with us," and Charles Wesley sings more beautifully than ever—

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky—
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly."

And there I see one who was a poor, poverty-stricken woman in this world, lived on a dirt floor, in rags, and went through this world with weeping eyes and a saddened heart—now God has clothed her in robes of light, wiped all tears from her eyes, thrown into her heart the sunlight of eternal joy, and she triumphantly walks upon the golden streets—happy forever more!

Oh, what a grand, happy host to be presented to the Son of God! They are gathered up there. The wilderness and the solitary places have been glad for them—the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose—the eyes of the blind have been opened—the ears of the deaf have been unstopped—the lame man is leaping as a hart—the tongues of the dumb are singing, and the ransomed of the Lord have

returned and gone home to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads—they have obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing have forever flown away.

“ No more fatigue—no more distress,
Nor sin, nor hell shall reach the place;
No sighs shall mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues.

No rude alarms of raging foes,
No cares to break the long repose;
No midnight shade—no clouded sun,
But sacred, high, eternal noon.

O! long expected day begin,
Dawn on this world of woe and sin;
Fain would we leave this weary road,
And sleep in death to rest with God.”

WORK WHILE IT IS DAY.

By Rev. E. C. SELL,
Of the North Carolina Conference M. E. C. S.

“ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”—ST. JOHN ix:4.

Our Saviour was in the form and possessed the features of man; but while He resembled man in this particular, He was unlike man in the performance of His duty. During His stay on earth He left nothing undone which should have been done, and nothing unsaid which should have been said, but did and said all things that were necessary in order

to accomplish the great work which He was sent to do. And when "the night" had come, and when He was hanging between heaven and earth, suffering the agonies of death, He did not say to the mob, spare me another year, or another month, or another day; I have not done as I should have done, "the work of him that sent me." Release me that I may restore the blind to sight and heal the palsied limb. Let me go that I may cast out devils and raise the dead. No, no; He did not say, let me go that I may work more miracles, and, by these demonstrations of divine power, show to the world that I have come from the eternal throne on high down to this sinful world "to seek and to save that which was lost." But what did He say? Listen. Before "he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Hush! Stand still one moment, ye busy tribes of earth, and catch the words of the dying Lord—" *It is finished!* "

We, too, have a work to do. We have souls to save—immortal souls that will exist forever. O, where will these immortal souls of ours be when a portion of eternity equal to a million times a million years has passed by, after the archangel's trump wakes our silent dust, and our souls and bodies are again united and sent to an everlasting abode? They will be in the presence of God enjoying the happiness of heaven, or they will be in the presence of the devil suffering the torments of hell. The value! the value! O, the value of one soul! But where we will be depends upon ourselves. Our Saviour did His "work." The atonement has been made.

The plan of salvation stands completed. A way has been opened, thank God, for all who will to go up to "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."

But let us come nearer home. Let us be honest with ourselves. Let each one of us sincerely and prayerfully ask ourselves these questions: How is the case with me? Have I been "born again"? (St. John iii: 7) and am I at peace with God and all mankind? Have I done what I could to rescue those around me who are living in sin and going to hell? Have I co-operated with the minister of the gospel and the people of God, as I should, in their great work of trying to build up Zion and win souls to Christ? Have I contributed, according to my ability of the means that God has given me, to support the gospel at home? Have I, with my money, extended a helping hand to the poor benighted heathen who know not the true God? Have I done my whole duty as God would have me do it, and do I, this moment, stand acquitted before Him, in the sunlight of His favor, and with His love burning in my soul? And, after asking ourselves these questions, if we find that we have come short; if we find that we have failed to do our duty, and are "wanting" (Dan. v: 27), let us get down on our knees and pray to a merciful God for pardon. Let us wrestle, like Jacob, till the sun of righteousness shines into our souls, and Jesus whispers, "Peace"; and then let us go on and do what we can to win immortal souls to Christ.

The night of death is coming. What is the hour of the day of life? Which way do the shadow

point? Where is the sun? Is it climbing up toward the zenith? Has it already reached the meridian? Is it "bending low," or has it almost reached the horizon? Will it set this year? Will it set this month? Will it set to-day? God in heaven can answer these questions.

Should God look down from His throne to-day—yea, this hour—and say "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," could you say "My work is done; I am ready to go home and receive my reward"? or would you have to say "O Lord, my work is not done; I am not ready to die; spare me, spare me a little longer, and I will do what Thou wouldest have me do."

But remember, when "the night" comes, when the angel of death comes, we must go, ready or unready. Good Lord, help us all to be ready!

Think about this; pray over it; do thy work now "while it is day," for the night is coming "when no man can work."

ETERNAL LIFE.

By Rev. SOLOMON LEA,
Of the North Carolina Local Ministers' Conference.

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." John iii:36.

There are three leading thoughts to which our attention is invited, namely, the Son, faith and life. Who and what is the Son? He is the Lord Jesus Christ, called the Son of God and the Son of Man,

uniting mysteriously in Himself two natures, the human and divine. That He is human, is clearly demonstrated by the manner of His birth, His whole history and His death. As a human being He ate, drank, walked, talked and worked. He had a human body, with its properties and faculties, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, our sympathizing friend and our elder brother. He was emphatically a human being, having our nature, with sin excepted. As a man He was the most perfect, the most lovely and the most unselfish being that ever existed. There was not a defect, a blemish, a stain in His nature and character. That He is divine, as the Son of God, is proved beyond all doubt by His life, His miracles and His teaching. As the Son of God the Father, He has His nature, His character and His attributes.

He is represented in the Scriptures as the Creator, the Preserver and Disposer of all things in heaven and earth. The inspired apostle says: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men." "For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him, and His before all things, and in Him all things consist." With such declarations, and many others that might be quoted, who can

doubt the divinity of the Son of God? The Epistle of Hebrews seems mainly designed to prove the superiority and divinity of Christ Jesus our Lord. And yet there are denominations and many professed Christian people who doubt and even deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, in all his epistles, usually begins with this declaration, "Grace to you from God, our Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ." We worship Jesus Christ, which would be idolatry if He is not divine. The Son is the object of our faith, not only as a human and divine being, but He is especially so as our atoning sacrifice, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The Apostle says God forbid "that I should glory save in Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even must the Son be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." As sinners, we are conscious of sin, of our guilt, our danger and loss; we look to the cross, the bleeding and suffering victim, and as we gaze and believe, the burden of guilt is taken away, peace and comfort spring up. Oh! what a change. From condemnation to justification, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to light, from the child of the devil to the son of God. No wonder we love, we praise, we adore the blessed Jesus.

The second leading thought is *Faith*. It admits of different kinds and of different degrees.

Historical faith is simply credence or belief in some fact or event that has occurred. Evangelical

or saving faith is not only credence, but much more; it is confidence, reliance, a personal trust in God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Saviour. Such a faith is always accompanied with love and obedience. Is faith the gift of God? In one view, it is. God gives us the object of our faith, and also the evidence of our faith, but the act of believing is our own, with God's preventing grace. Faith is of every possible degree, little faith, weak faith, great faith, strong faith. This depends upon many and various causes. It is susceptible of growth and expansion and cultivation. Reading and studying the Scriptures, meditation and intense agonizing prayer have a tendency to increase and strengthen our faith. Who and what can limit our faith? It is a mighty power; it grasps the promises and power of God, upheaves mountains, stops the sun in his course, and works mighty miracles. The Scriptures abound with illustrations and examples of its power.

The third leading idea in our text is *Life*—eternal life. There are different kinds of life—vegetable, animal, and spiritual life. Plants and trees have a life. Fluids and juices circulate through them. Animals have life, the blood, its vital principle, circulating through them. The life of a human being depends upon the union of the soul, the immortal principle, with the body. Separate the two, and he dies. So, in spiritual life, it depends upon its union with Christ. Faith is the connecting principle. Faith brings the two parties together and cements and continues them. The Apostle says, "The live that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of

God." As believers, we live by faith. Our text says not life only, but "eternal life." Its principle exists now, continues through life and is not severed by death. Death does not, nor cannot destroy this spiritual life. No power in heaven or earth can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We may by our own conduct and commission of sin dis sever the union and destroy this living principle. The Apostle exclaims, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! the pleasure, the enjoyment of this spiritual life! Nothing on earth can equal it. It is cheering, comforting, elevating. "It is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath laid up for them that love him." And then its value! who can estimate it? Precious gold and sparkling diamonds cannot be compared with it. Let us praise and bless God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ now and forever. Amen.

THE GOSPEL CALL.

By Rev. LEVI BRANSON, D. D.,

Secretary of the North Carolina Local Ministers' Conference.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—REVELATION xxii:17.

Noah, the first commissioned preacher, was a missionary without any fixed church, and without a salary; and while it would have been to the infinite

interest of the people to have paid for the truth, and then to have profited by it, God did not commit the absurdity of either *requiring* or *expecting* them to purchase the message which condemned their wickedness and announced their certain destruction. The race had *suddenly, wilfully* and *utterly* gone astray, and nothing but a sudden, wilful and sweeping destruction on the part of Deity could have awakened in man interest *in* or respect *for* the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

While this *first great* missionary made not *one* convert among the mighty millions teeming down to the flood, he was yet much more successful than many of the nineteenth century, in that he brought off victoriously his own household. What an example for all succeeding preachers of the riches of the everlasting kingdom!

The world now began to learn of the existence and power of Deity. In due time the heavenly messages of warning and peace were entrusted to a larger number of heralds, and the world was made alive by the glorious news of a Saviour to come; a Wonderful Counsellor, a Messianic Priest, the wonderful example of a priest for the world that should Himself become the all-atonning sacrifice.

But the church of God was only gradually established among men. Nor was the plan of salvation pressed too rapidly upon those to be saved, but so far as could be done, *man* was made instrumental in working out the plan. Hence he was given a priesthood long before he became a prophet, and

many were installed as priests who were not yet fitted for the prophetic career. The priesthood of the Jewish church was a very different thing from the priesthood or the ministry of the present day, in that it was a continued and laborious exemplification of the living sacrifice yet *to be* made in the person of Jesus; and all the daily performances of four thousand years were only sufficient to prepare the fallen mind for the comprehension of the great atonement. Only thus did men come plainly to understand that by the shedding of blood alone is there remission of sins. The prophets of olden times seem not always to have been priests, nor the priests always to have been prophets; but the priesthood was provided for by law, both as to its continuance and support, that there might always be before the people a remembrance of the glorious things to come; but of prophecy, there was no legal organization and no legal provision for support.

Here is a distinction not always noted, and one that may enlighten us as to the divine manner of propagating truth in the earth.

In the earlier ages of Christianity the church was supposed to be but a continuance of the Levitical priesthood, and even to the present day, in all essential points, except the mere shedding of beastly blood, this doctrine is held and practiced by the Romanists all over the world. This failure to see *how* Christ is a new dispensation; to see how the Christian ministry is different from the old priesthood; failure to see how the one was *typical* and *legal*, while the other

is *spiritual* and *persuasive*, has caused the innumerable evils in the union of Church and State, and led the Roman church to claim the political supremacy of the world. Christ established a spiritual kingdom, and sent out a spiritual ministry to enlist subjects for this kingdom. This ministry is worthy of temporal support always and everywhere, but such is the earnestness and the benevolence of the Master that He will not for a moment cease to have sinners called, even at His own expense and the individual expense of His lovely messengers. The Spirit spoken of in the text is the Great Teacher in the world since the Saviour's return to the heavenly mansions.

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come," and every message heralded by men or angels must be sealed by the Spirit sent by Christ before it can move successfully the stubborn hearts of men.

The new dispensation is infinitely more liberal than men generally suppose, and the divine messengers vastly more numerous than the ancient priesthood. The Spirit says come; the bride, or the church, says come. And now a word as to the church. Christianity is essentially social in its nature, and hence extremely organizing. Wherever these truths of the New Testament are preached, men begin to organize for defence and for aggressive movement; but it is not organization that gives force to the gospel—it is the gospel that gives force to organization; and it should never be trammeled by excessive organization.

Methodism, a most wonderful organization induced by the spirit of Christianity, cannot live a day with-

out spirituality, and no part of its machinery, whether it be the class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the itineracy, or even the local ministry, can be relied on for the salvation of the church. All machinery is good, eminently good when full of the Spirit. The bride is *beautiful* when adorned, but she is a *living power* when filled with the fires of the Holy Ghost.

The church, Christ's lovely bride, says come, most effectually when most infused with spirituality. Then not only the Spirit itself is a swift-winged messenger, calling men from every clime and every station to drink of the living fountain, but the church in her organized and spiritualized capacity appeals in lovely attitude to the trembling, sinking sinner.

Still more than this, every son or daughter hearing the Spirit, or hearing the bride say come, is commissioned at once to catch the sweet command and echo it down the ages, till "come" shall be changed from a command to a hallelujah of praise, saying, "Lo! they come with joy and everlasting songs."

But over the hills and plains are found the millions of wandering thirsty children, athirst for the waters of life; parched and weak, weary and sinking, fainting by the wayside, fainting in the fields of strife, fainting in the crowded thoroughfares, fainting in the quiet homes, fainting amid those that should be friends; fainting, not from the scarcity of water, fainting, not of dire necessity but from wilful determination, in the very midst of pearly brooks and crystal fountains, within the gladsome sound of life-giving waters, surrounded by cooling groves and shady

lawns, the invigorating element above and below, on the right and on the left, behind and before; the enchanting gospel sound falling softly upon the ear thus, "And let him that is athirst come"—"And let him that is athirst come." A standing invitation is given the sinner. Christ is not formal. Would you wait for the pious prayers of some mitred priest? Would you wait for the ceremonial flourish of some robed ritualist? Would you wait for the magic pool of some baptismal regenerationist in which to be plunged, and plunged again to have your stains all washed away? Or yet more slothful, would you wait for Lot's kind angel, or some electionist to seize and *drag* you to the fountain? No! no! dying sinner, no—

"All the fitness Christ requireth,
Is to feel your need of him."

Come while you thirst,

"If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all."

Oh! lovely attitude of the heavenly messenger—stretching out inviting hands, weeping tears of pity for your lonely condition, enlightening the judgment, wooing the affections, but never, for a moment, trampling on the *will*, the guiding power of the mind. "And whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely." How free is your condition! How like the invitation to that of a father to his children—like, because it had no restriction but says "*whosoever*";

like because it appeals to the will. "Whosoever *will* let him take the water of life freely."

But for a moment let us take another view of the subject. Formerly the subject *received* life—now he is invited and commanded to *take* it of his own accord. Amid the darkness that preceded the flood, amid the direful influences of surrounding idolatry, from the flood down to Egypt, and from Egypt back to Canaan, now and then God sent His angels, as to Lot in Sodom, as to Jacob at Bethel, as to Abraham on the mount when about to plunge the knife into his own son—sent His angels in great mercy to *give* life and protection; and, indeed, the whole of the Old Testament is an example of the goodness of Deity *pressed* upon reluctant man.

But suddenly the scene changes. Look, ye careless millions, across the grassy plains of Palestine. See high in the East that strange yet lovely star. Listen, ye shepherds that nightly watch your cheerful flocks on the moonlit plains of Judea. And while that star benignant shines down on Bethlehem, and while those white-robed angels come floating over the quiet plains, hear ye no electric news? See ye no signs of the world's great revolution?

That star has never yet gone down, but rises higher and higher to guide poor sinners home; the songs of glory that burst forth upon the shepherds have never yet been hushed. That fountain opened there in the house of King David has never yet been closed.

From that very moment the command went forth “whosoever will let him come and *take* the water of life freely.” It is a public festival—a national festival—a universal festival to which all may come and feast and drink and drink and feast until the gates of heaven shall be opened and the wine shall be poured out anew in our Father’s kingdom. Was there ever such invitation? Was there ever such festival? Did any other king ever invite his subjects to such a universal feast? In the *Garden life* was a *tree* of which man did eat and live; *now life* is a *fountain*, a *river*, along whose shady banks the weary sinner comes for peace—amid whose aromatic groves millions have rested and quaffed the stream and quaffed the stream and rested till inexpressible joy lifts the heart to the glories of the New Jerusalem. Blessed be Jesus, all may “take the water freely.”

How extensive, then, is the ministry! Bishops may call us to the fountain, and we rejoice in the sound of such trumpets. Elders may sound the sweet refrain from the walls of Zion, and we hear it with gladness. Deacons may shout the harvest home, and sing with the enraptured hosts of God’s children as they drink of the healing waters. The children that hear the enchanting melody may catch the glad sound and echo it down the living stream. Yea, sinners, too, far off upon the dark mountains of sin, may rush to the cooling waters, singing hosanna to the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain for us. The paid herald may invite to the fountain, the unpaid missionary, bearing the heat and burden of the day,

may call as loudly as any. The final settlement for all our labors is yonder amid the shady groves.

The layman, by his daily walk and Godly conversation, is a messenger of peace, many of whom will appear at the stream with their families and neighbors to drink forever. And every woman may become a Martha or a Mary ministering to Christ and His flock. But who shall reap the immortal honors that shall be awarded the leaders of the Sabbath-school army—this host of little messengers that make the world echo with the songs of peace and gladness? In other days it was thought right and proper to let these lambs stray away into the wilderness for many years, that God's messengers might have work to do in calling them back to the flock. Alas! how many millions now still wander away from the voice of the heavenly messenger, and wandering on will never find the path that leads up Calvary's hill and brings the traveler in view of the all-atoning sacrifice.

Christ designed that these lambs should not only be called to share the riches of His grace, but also to have them go forth singing and shouting the praises of the world's Redeemer. If we could consider the man Christ Jesus only as the infidels of the present day affect to view Him, a man simply as other great men, having His talents, His own peculiar wisdom, and His own peculiar history like other men, still we should be compelled to award the praise of highest, deepest wisdom, when at one stroke of policy He placed the entire infant world among the list of His subjects. "Of such is the kingdom." The children,

embracing more than half the entire race of man, so long uncalled for, so long forgotten and neglected by great men, are gathered into the arms of the man Christ Jesus, enrolled on the list of the redeemed and sent forth as fit and lovely representatives of the white-robed millions that dwell around the Father's throne. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God has ordained praise." No other leader has so many ministers as our Captain; and those men who would strip the divinity from Christ, only show their utter ignorance, wickedness and stupidity.

But our text breathes flaming words of missionary zeal. The cry is "Come," and as each listener hears the joyful invitation, he is commanded to echo it to those around until all that thirst shall be filled with the free water of life.

The age is hastening on to a glorious consummation. Soon the era will be upon us when it shall not be inquired, Where is Christ, and who are His ministers? Those denominations that put only a paid force in the field and earnestly pray God to call only such and as many as can be supported, will soon be left in the dim distance of the past.

Those that prate about apostolic succession, and would hardly invite the sinner only after the most formal introduction, and would shun to enter the gates of glory only in all the pomp and circumstance of a conqueror; these and all such must stand back and let the army of living messengers sweep the inviting field.

The Methodist church, whatever faults she may have in theology, whatever defects in the ritualism of her machinery, has, nevertheless, in some desirable measure caught the great liberal spirit of Christianity. We recognize every man, woman and child of the church as a herald of the Cross; and while we have our Bishops and pastors paid by the church, and must ever have them to develop the liberality of our people, the command of the text is too *broad*, the invitation too *full* to restrict the *number* of messengers. The fires of a Saviour's love set all the world to preaching the wonderful doctrine. Oh! it is life awaits us. It is death we fear—it is life we seek. The water that fills that beautiful river, that comes like silvery waves down from the everlasting throne is the "water of life." Drink of it, ye thirsty sinners; drink of it, ye royal heads of the earth; drink of it, ye famished soldiers that fight the battles of ambitious potentates; drink, again, and deeper and *longer*, ye members of Christ's church militant; drink of it, ye little children that adorn the family circle and swell the Sabbath-school chorus till the welkin rings again; drink of it, one and all of these, drink till you thirst no more forever. Yes, freely. It was given freely. It flows as the free gift of a free Saviour. Let no other duty intrude. Come, ye wasted famished swearer, polluted by the oaths of a score of years, and *freely* quaff the water; come ye skeptics of many sorrowing days, who have failed to find joy in the logic of infidelity; we offer you to-day, "without money and without price," the healing water; come,

all ye young men and young ladies of undoubted morality, who have trusted in your good behavior to gain you entrance to glory—you, even you, need the life-giving water; and as you sink your empty pitchers into the stream, and as you taste and taste again, yes, drink and drink again of this magic flood, burst forth ye imprisoned soul! sing out, ye stifled voices! break forth, ye buried emotions of the soul! Yes, then all earth, both men and God and angels and spirits and Christ will join to swell the everlasting song. Then you shall thirst no more. Oh, how free! And now ye may warn travelers in Zion's way. Ye men of age, whose cheeks are furrowed with the cares of many years; ye humble Christian men, who love beneath the cross to stand; ye quiet sisters of the church, whose trials have been long and sore; ye young soldiers of Christ's living army, whose youthful cheeks are still flushed with hope and manly vigor—yes, come all these at the call of the silvery gospel sound. Come to-day; come *now*, and taste the limpid stream.

We shall drink it forever up yonder. Now, while we lift our hearts to ask for golden drops and spirit-food for days to come, in one united emotion we will draw nigh the flowing stream. Yea, when we have filled our thirsty souls again here to-day, these self-sacrificing ministers, these faithful laymen of the church, these Marthas and Marys who love to anoint the Saviour's feet, these children of the church—all, all, all! with sweet accord will go forth proclaiming the glorious news of the text, “And the spirit and

the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

By Rev. W. W. STALEY,
Of the Christian Church.

"I speak concerning Christ and the church." EPHESIANS v: 32.

The married state is one of *separation, unity, order, affection.* "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother;" "and they two shall be one flesh;" "for the husband is the head of the wife;" and "men ought to love their wives."

These principles are the fountains of *purity, peace and happiness.* They are the pillars on which the social fabric and civil nations rest. "This is a great mystery;" but Paul is speaking concerning "Christ and the church." The relation of the church to Christ is one of *separation from the world, unity among the members, order in life, and love one to another.* All that the *church has* belongs to *Christ*, and all that *Christ has* belongs to the *church*. The relationship is mutual, and can only be maintained by fidelity on the part of the "*Lamb's wife.*" Mysteries disappear when truth is viewed from the inner courts of its own temple; and experience is the only door into the relation between "*Christ and the church.*"

1. *The entire volume of Scripture is divine speech concerning "Christ and the church."* In that afternoon walk, with the two going to Emmaus, Jesus discoursed about *Himself*. "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning *Himself*." "Search the *Scriptures*; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of *me*." "For the testimony of *Jesus* is the spirit of *prophecy*." "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

2. *The essential qualification of the true church is the presence of Christ as its life and head.* "This is *He*, that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to Him in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was *Christ*." He is always the central figure in the church. "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever."

3. *The church, in the conception of God, is worthy to become the bride of Christ.* A great painting, as seen by an artist and one who is not, presents two pictures. To the artist the painting is a masterpiece, beautiful in design, significant in conception, wonderful in outline, perfect in proportions; to the other it is only a mass of colors thrown together, with no

charm, no purpose, no meaning. A sinful world sees only the faults and failures, the imperfections and inconsistencies of the church. God sees *His design, His purpose, His work*, in her *possibilities*. Michael Angelo was seen to pull a rough block of marble from the filthy gutter, and he was criticised by those who looked on. But the great artist said: "I see an angel in this stone;" and he went to work with his chisel and brought the angel out of it. He saw what others did not, and he developed what he saw. God looks at the church and sees possibilities; and if the church will submit to Him, He will bring out and present to Himself a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but *holy* and without *blemish*."

I. *The Christ of Scripture is the personal manifestation of all the divinest and humanest principles essential to the noblest character and the best society.*

1. He sets before men, in Himself, His *nature, character, and work*. He presents the divine nature and the human nature at the climacteric point. "*God was manifested in the flesh.*" At the marriage in Cana Christ "*manifested forth His glory.*" His character was untarnished by the world. "*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*" Artists place before their pupils a perfect piece of art, reduced to dimensions suited to their work, and call it a "*study.*" Christ is "*the study*" for man. He is the miniature of God, with a human

life as the medium of the Divine manifestation. "Learn of *me*," sums up man's duty in his search after spiritual light and truth. "In whom are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." His work embraces no less than the comfort of the mourner and the salvation of the lost. "He came not to call the *righteous*, but *sinners*." In the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath, He stood up, opened the book and read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the *gospel* to the *poor*; He hath sent me to *heal* the *broken-hearted*, to preach *deliverance* to the *captives* and *recovering* of *sight* to the *blind*, to set at *liberty* them that are *bruised*." This outline of His work challenges the thought and faith of the world. He proposes to alleviate all the burdens of man, and to remove the guilt of sin from all that believe in Him. His work is so broad, so philanthropic, so full of salvation, that the white-robed throng in heaven surround his throne with the highest and holiest praise. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

2. He fulfills prophecy, reduces ritualism to life, and rebukes caste and exclusiveness by His teachings and walk among men. "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." "Think not that I am come to destroy the *law* or the *prophets*: I am not come to destroy, but

to fulfill." The Old Testament, as well as the New, is God's word to man; and Christ put the seal of his life on this *word*. When the Pharisees and certain Scribes found fault with His disciples because they ate with unwashed hands and walked not according to the tradition of the elders, Jesus replied, "This people honoreth me with their *lips*, but their *heart* is from me. There is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." The *life* and not the *form* determines character. The Jewish church was exclusive in its thoughts and customs. Jews and Samaritans had no dealings. Jews excluded Gentiles, and did not admit them to the privileges of their religion. "I have never eaten anything common or unclean," said Peter, when he saw the vision. But the call from Cornelius interpreted the mystery, and when he preached in Cesarea the word was blessed abundantly. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the *Gentiles* also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Jesus never failed to recognize any who believed on Him. To accept Christ by faith, and to follow Him in life, embraces the essential thing in religion. Forms, theories, modes, may have their place in the church, but Christ is the bread of life to men. The church should be as inclusive as Christ. He not only did not exclude Jew and Gentile, but publicans and sinners, thieves and harlots, found welcome and par-

don in His heart. His life became their salvation, and their life His praise. The gospel is a system of open arms, of cordial heart, of world-wide benevolence, of peace and good-will to men. All these were exhibited in the person of Christ. He excludes nothing but sin, as light excludes nothing but darkness.

3. Christ presents the possibilities of humanity, under the inspiration of the divine presence, and invites all men to follow Him as their guide.

The incarnation is not only a manifestation of *God*, but of *humanity*. He shows man himself, not only as he is, but in his possibilities. Sin was never seen in its alarming aspects till Christ set the perfect type before men. Even the church and religion of the time were outward forms without life. Hear Christ, as He addresses the church : “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.” Christ confronted this heartless, formal church with a warm, loving, helping *life*. His character was sweet and attractive. His work was full of help to men. He made them see the beauty and power of a good, true life. His teachings and purity revealed the damning nature of sin; and at the same time discovered to men the way out of darkness into the light of God. Human

nature, under this inspiration of the divine presence, may become perfect in doctrine and practice. It was so in the *person of Jesus Christ*. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet *without sin*." God might have chosen some other method of manifesting *Himself*, but He could have chosen no other method of so completely manifesting the possibilities of man. Man is capable of a sinless life, and that life will be attained in heaven. "The *sting of death is sin*; and the *strength of sin is the law*. But thanks be to *God*, which giveth us the *victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*." Christ invites men to follow Him. "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and *take up his cross and follow me*." Following Christ involves *self-denial* and suffering. "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed." To choose suffering for duty's sake marks the hero. It was the choice of Moses, and Christ, our Captain, was made perfect through suffering. The Hebrew children could pass through the furnace untouched by fire because there was a fourth with them like unto the "*Son of God*." Paul may be driven by the storm for fourteen days and nights without sun and stars, but in the midst of howling tempest and despairing men he utters words of cheer: "Be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve."

II. *The church of Scripture is the organized presentation of the wisest and truest principles for the government and well being of man.*

1. The principles of the gospel are universal in their design and adaptation. "God sent not His Son into the *world* to condemn the *world*; but that the *world*, through Him, might be saved." The design of the gospel is to save the *world*; and it is to be preached to *every creature*. In the final purpose of grace there will be a "new earth." Regenerate humanity will regenerate the world. "The law of the Lord is perfect." It is adapted to all times and conditions. It converts the soul and puts it under grace. It differs from all the laws made by men. There are no inequalities in it, and no chance for injustice to the humblest man on earth. It is adjustable like all of God's blessings. Air and light are self-adjusting to all conditions of earth; and gospel principles are even more adjustable to the moral conditions of the soul. It courts investigation and trial, welcomes the challenge of the world, and encircles the spacious globe with its bands of mercy and love. It penetrates the heart and arrests the man by his conscience, and makes him tremble in the presence of himself. It tries the sinner in the court-chamber of his own being, and makes him plead for mercy or stand condemned by himself, and "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Here is the only realm of character building, and the only court where truth is free. Weightier than any cause of man and time are the

issues weighed in the heart when the gospel makes its plea.

2. The elements composing the historic church are witnesses to the perfection of its purposes and methods. "Not many *wise* men after the flesh, not many *mighty*, not many *noble*, are called; but God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the *wise*; and God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things that are *mighty*." The obscure have furnished the material out of which the gospel has moulded the noblest types of character, even as nature crystalizes the diamond out of black carbon. Simple fishermen, under its transforming power, turned the thought and destiny of nations; and a return to the principles of faith mothered the reformation. The making of great things out of poor elements proves the greatness of the processes. The gospel first introduced this principle, and now science and art follow its example. Useful products from useless material is now the order of progress. This simply answers to the demand of the gospel, and proves that the world is coming to Christ. Radiant as the sunbeams of morning reflected from myriads of dew-drops, spher'd in tiny worlds of brightness, and hanging on grass and corn-field and flower, are the principles of the gospel as they announce their presence and sway in the church, composed of those who were once "without hope and without God in the world." The poor have the gospel preached to them. Sinners are converted into heirs of salvation. The maniac is clothed

and in his right mind. The thief enters Paradise with his Saviour. The church had its origin in the Divine thought, is founded on Christ, and stands as a refuge for sinners.

3. The functions and work of the church are limited only by its reception and application of the gospel of Christ. Service and sacrifice marked the history of Christ in the world. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "And whosoever will be rich among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." There is nothing plainer than that the church should impoverish itself to enrich the world; and work is its badge and the charter of its right to exist. To grow rich or self-righteous is to die. The home is endangered when the bride antagonizes the love and efforts of her husband: so the interests of Zion are hindered when the church ignores the love and work of Christ. If Christ suffered, the church must suffer; if Christ gave His life to save sinners, so must the church. The church is joined by eternal wedlock to Christ. If He was conqueror, the church will finally prevail.

THE GREAT BUSINESS OF LIFE.

By Rev. R. H. WHITAKER, D. D.,

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"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."—ECCLESIASTES xii:13.

The first, and the all-important, question which confronts every human being born into the world, is, "What is the great business of life?" The text answers that question: "Fear God and keep his commandments."

The poet who wrote—

" 'Tis not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die,"

had been studying this life-problem, and had rightly reached the conclusion that life means a great deal more than simply trying to get the best things which earth can bestow; that there is something higher, nobler, grander, holier to engage the thoughts of mortals than those allurements of time and sense which, at the best, can do us no good when Death lays his hand upon us.

The Saviour of men gave to the world the keynote when He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. * * * Take no

thought for your life, * * * But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things else shall be added unto you."

If we would make life a success, we should first decide the question, *What is success?*

Viewed from a worldly standpoint, every selfish or ambitious man who, through fortuitous circumstances, or by shrewdness, or even by the use of baser means, succeeds in making fame or fortune, is considered "a success."

Were this life all, this conflict between men for wealth and honor the only test of manhood, and the only requirement of God, the world's standard of success would be correct. But when we remember that just ahead of us is death, and the resurrection, and the judgment, and the eternal future, the world's standard of what constitutes success is a fearful delusion.

I would not discourage the desire which prompts men to accumulate, or to elevate themselves in the world; neither would I discourage them from seeking to be leaders among their fellows (for there must be thinkers and leaders in the world), but I would draw as sharply as I may be able a contrast between that success which satisfies the world on the one hand, and that success which will secure the plaudit of "well done" when man meets his God.

I know not how better to do this than by introducing two Bible characters whose lives were as opposite as the poles. I allude to Solomon of the Old Testament and St. Paul of the New.

Solomon's life, measured by the world's standard, was a magnificent success. Measured by the same standard, St. Paul's was a most miserable failure.

When the world reads that Solomon ascended the throne of his father David under the most favorable auspices; that he was endowed with more wisdom than any man or monarch of his day; that he so prospered that he became the richest as well as the wisest king in all the earth; that he reigned over Israel forty years, living in such luxury as no other king was able to imitate; that he became the most renowned of all the kings of his day, and finally died amid the splendor in which he had so long lived, it involuntarily exclaims, "What a grand success was Solomon's life!"

On the other hand, when the world reads that Saul of Tarsus, the proud Pharisee, after having been carefully reared and educated in the faith of his fathers, renounced the teachings of his youth to become the disciple of the despised Nazarene, which act subjected him to cold, hunger and all sorts of privations; estranged him from home, relatives and friends, and sent him forth a wanderer among the nations of the earth; resulted in stripes, imprisonment, shipwreck, and that finally he was beheaded by order of the Emperor Nero; its verdict is, "What a miserable failure was the life of Paul!"

If vast possessions, earthly wisdom, luxurious living and far-reaching fame constitute success, then, indeed, was Solomon's life a most magnificent success.

On the other hand, if suffering persecutions, enduring hardships, being often imprisoned, and, finally, being beheaded, constitute a failure, St. Paul's life was a most stupendous failure.

But which of these two lives was the successful one? This is the question we propose to answer in this discourse; or, rather, let the two men answer for themselves.

In his earlier life, when in the full flush of manhood and royal greatness, Solomon seems not to have comprehended, as he did at a later period when he wrote my text, what constitutes the great business of life. For, in his old age, after he had spent a life in the pursuit of pleasure, he wrote a book for no other reason that we can conceive of than to make a confession of his sins, and warn the young men of all ages against making the mistakes which made his life such an utter failure. In substance, he says: "I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem, having inherited the throne from my father David, whom God loved; and no young king ever ascended a throne under more favorable auspices; for, added to all the other favorable circumstances and conditions, I was the anointed of God who took special delight in me and the people over whom I ruled. But, instead of staying my heart upon God, and doing the things which He commanded, I gave my heart to seek and search out wisdom concerning all the things that are done under heaven. I wanted to be wise above my fellow-men, and I wanted this superior wisdom, not because I desired to use it for

the good of humanity and the glory of God, but because of the pleasure it might afford me. So I left nothing undone that would add to my store of knowledge until I had seen or known of all the works under the sun. At length, I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo! I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge; but, to my great disappointment, I found, after all the efforts I had made to get wisdom, that in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. That, after all, it was but vanity and vexation of spirit."

Failing to find that pleasure which he supposed great knowledge would give, he tells us that he tried another experiment. He says, "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore I gave myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom." In other words, he thought he could drink wine and be mirthful and yet continue to grow in knowledge. But finding that to be a failure, he partially, if not entirely, left off the getting of any more knowledge, and resorted more frequently to the wine-cup, drawing about him what the world would call gay companions; and we may conclude, from the statement he makes, that he sowed wild oats as madly as ever a reckless young man did. But he tells us that it failed of bringing him happiness; that it, also, was vanity and vexation of spirit.

Not to be outdone, he resorted to another means to secure happiness. He says, "I made me great works; I built houses, planted vineyards, made me gardens, planting trees in them of all kinds of fruits; made pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house. I also had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were ever in Jerusalem; I gathered also silver and gold in great abundance; and then, that I might enjoy my vast possessions, I got me men and women singers, and bought all kinds of musical instruments, that I might have the very best music which the world could afford me. In short, whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy."

After hearing his statement the world may say, "Surely, Solomon's life was a success!" But Solomon contradicts that opinion. Hear him, after he had gotten everything that eye desired or heart coveted :

"Then I looked upon all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." His works had amounted to nothing, for the reason that he labored to make Solomon happy, not caring for others. And, remembering that he must soon die and leave all his greatness and grandeur and the results of his toil, he says: "I hated all the labor which I had taken under the sun, because I must

leave them unto the man that shall come after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" Oppressed with grief and shame, because of his mistakes and sins, Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes that he might utter a solemn warning to the youth of all ages and encourage them to a better life than he lived. To that end he says: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." By which he means to teach the young man who may thirst after knowledge, fame, riches or pleasure, that work done for God and his fellow-men will pay him back in blessings after many days; while that done to gratify one's selfish desires is as so much labor lost. He means to say, if God endows thee, young man, with great wisdom, use it to make the world better and happier, instead of using it in the effort to make yourself happy, as I, Solomon, did, and failed.

If God gives thee riches, use them to scatter seeds of righteousness, that the world may be speedily brought to a knowledge of God, instead of making them the means of a luxurious living, as I, Solomon, did, to my sorrow.

If God gives thee great social and official influence, use it in propagating and disseminating pure principles, instead of compromising and finally wasting it all as I, Solomon, did, in the company of idolatrous women.

I, Solomon, made a mistake at the start; but I would not have the youth who read of my greatness and glory make a similar one. Therefore, in my old

age, and in my sins, I feel constrained to say to the youth of all succeeding generations, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

You may rejoice, O, young man, in your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart (as I, Solomon, have done to my sorrow), but know ye that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. In my old age I see and acknowledge my mistake. I now understand what it is to live in this world; what the great business of life really is; what it is that constitutes a successful life; and I would warn the world against the mistake I have made. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

From the story of Solomon, the wise, the great, the rich, let us turn for awhile to Saul of Tarsus, the young man who held the clothing of those who stoned Stephen, but who was so miraculously converted while going to Damascus to persecute the Christians. When the voice from heaven said: "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest," Saul surrendered and cried out in reply, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And when that voice said, "I have chosen thee to be a teacher, an apostle to the Gentiles"—to leave home, and kindred, and old associations, and go out into the world and lead men to higher and better lives, bearing the reproaches of the gospel, and, if need be, suffering, and even dying

in defence of that kingdom which Christ came to establish—he “was not disobedient” to the voice of God, but entered at once, and for life, upon his great work.

Saul had his prejudices like other men, but they vanished, never to be thought of again, when, from the lips of the Son of God, he received his great commission. He had relatives and friends in Silicia and in Jerusalem who hated Jesus and His disciples, and who would hate him, also, when it became known that he had espoused the cause of the Nazarene; but he did not hesitate. He decided at once and forever to cast his lot with Christ, let the consequences be what they might. And so when that heavenly voice said, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do,” he started; and, although blind, and for three days and nights without meat or drink or sleep, he did not falter, much less despair. And when, at last, Ananias laid his hand upon his shoulder, saying, “Brother Saul, receive thy sight,” he received that anointing that separated him forever from the past and made him the apostle to the Gentile world.

He may have had other ambitions, but a new one took possession of him when the scales fell from his eyes, and he more fully comprehended the meaning of Calvary and the cross. It was to do the will of God—preach the gospel to the Gentiles—and he entered at once upon that great work. Writing to the Galatians concerning his conversion and call to the ministry, he says: “But when it pleased God,

who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." And he says that it was three years before he finally returned to Jerusalem, and then it was on business pertaining to his work, remaining there only a few days. What his feelings were when entering that city, after an absence of three years, and the scenes through which he had passed, no one can ever know; but we may suppose that many conflicting recollections pressed themselves upon his mind. But none of them moved him from the line of duty. He might have seen old associates, the friends of his youth, who were very dear to him when he and they alike sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and together studied the law of Moses, and alike imbibed a hatred for the lowly and despised Nazarene whom he now so dearly loved; but they hated him now even more than the Nazarene. But Saul had the blessed consciousness of knowing that he was right, and he could pray for them and love them, even though they hated him. He doubtless thought then, as he afterwards said on two different occasions, "None of these things move me." * * "I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which

are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

From the day of his miraculous conversion until his death his life history was a succession of cross-bearings, sufferings, self-denials and duties well performed. He had no will of his own. Putting himself entirely into the hands of God, he was willing to be abased or to abound, to live or die, as it pleased Him. "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain," as he said in substance on more than one occasion. It showed how unconcerned he was as to this life. And when, at last, the end came, he as calmly wrote to his beloved Timothy, as if announcing a visit to a friend, "I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

Solomon had his pleasure and his crown in this world. Paul chose the light affliction, which is but for a moment, "that worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and a crown of righteousness at the hands of the Lord, the righteous Judge, at that day."

Solomon looked at the things that are seen. Paul looked at the things that are unseen. Solomon lost all, for which he had labored, in death. Paul gained all, for which he had labored, when his head was severed from his body and the chariot of heaven bore his immortal spirit "to that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Solomon's life was a failure; Paul's was a most glorious success.

Whatever else it may accomplish, life is a failure, indeed, to that being who fails to realize the truth of the hymn—

“A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify ;
A never dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky.”

How few of us remember, as we should, the sacred trust which God has committed to us! And if we sometimes awake to a realization of the great duty of life, how few of us pray as fervently as we should the prayer of the poet—

“Arm me with jealous care
As in thy sight to live,
And oh, thy servant, Lord prepare
A strict account to give.”

The world calls that man a hero who, in life, makes men and nations fear and tremble before him; but the world's estimate of heroism is incorrect. He only is great who subdues self and subordinates his will and his life to the will of God.

The world is prone to pay homage to those who distinguished themselves in war, statesmanship, learning, or by the accumulation of riches. But the world's homage is of no value to an immortal soul that is unfit, when leaving its tenement of clay, to meet its God.

There had been great men before the days of Christ—conquerors, like Alexander the Great; philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates; rich men like Croesus and others; yet it is a remarkable fact that, in all his discourses, He never alluded to any of them in terms of praise. But He did commend the widow who cast her mite into the treasury and the woman who anointed Him for His burial, saying: “Wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her.”

In what respect is the world better to-day because rich men like Croesus, or conquerors like Alexander the Great lived in it? What really valuable thing should we lose were their lives history blotted out? Not all the conquerors, statesmen, philosophers and poets of the ages past left such a legacy of good to the world as John Bunyan, the illiterate dreamer of Bedford Street Jail, who feared God and kept His commandments.

To be truly great is to be truly good. And to be truly good is to conform to the requirements of heaven.

The Greeks had a fable of the Sirens, whose sweet music enchanted the seamen who sailed past the island on which they dwelt, and when allured to land they were slain. When Ulysses went by he filled the ears of his sailors with wax and lashed himself to the mast. He heard the music and wished to land, but could not because he was bound.

The sailors heard it not because their ears were filled with wax—so they all passed safely by.

But when Orpheus went by, the music of whose lyre enchanted not only all on board, but beasts, rocks and trees as well, he produced so much better music than the Sirens could make that no one wished to land.

Ulysses, lashed to his mast, may fitly represent the moralist. He hears the music of worldly temptation and wants to yield to its seductiveness, but resolution holds him, and self-interest—his own safety—is the thong that binds him. Orpheus is the Christian with better music in his soul. “The love of Christ constraineth him.” May it be the blessed privilege of us all to have our hearts so filled with Christ that neither the allurements of the world, the weakness of the flesh, nor the wiles of the devil shall prevent us from giving heed to the text—“Fear God and keep His commandments.”

UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

By Rev. W. P. WILLIAMS,
Of the North Carolina Local Ministers' Conference.

“For the body is not one member, but many.”—1 CORINTHIANS, xii:14.

Eighteen hundred and forty-six years ago St. Paul punctured with his sharp satire the ecclesiastical self-conceit which proposes one church as a model for all the rest, and measures every other by its conformity to that model. Hear him: “The body is

not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body": *i. e.*, now are they many denominations, yet but one church, Christ, the head, His church, the "body;" and all the different denominations members of that "body." Hence, the Presbyterian cannot say to the Methodist, "We have no need of thee;" nor the Methodist to the Baptist, "We have no need of you," etc. Nay, much more those churches which seem to be "more feeble" are necessary for the conversion of the world.

Until comparatively recently many Protestant churches, while they indignantly disclaimed the infallibility of the Pope, vehemently asserted their own, and proposed to cut off from the "body," or to declare as quite imperfect members of it, all those churches which did not perform the same functions in the same way with themselves.

In nothing is the power and progress of Christianity more evidenced than in the rapidity with which this anti-Christian spirit of pride is disappearing from the Christian church.

The first era of the church was one of uniformity. The priesthood did the thinking for the people; the bishops did the thinking for the priesthood, and the Pope did the thinking for the bishops; and it follows that when one man does all the thinking for all men, all men will think as one man.

The second era was one of qualified liberty. Each one claimed the right to think for himself, but denied that right to his neighbor. Each new body claimed the right, not only to determine the creed and method of worship for itself, but also for *all its neighbors*.

But we have passed that era and are coming into a third, in which we begin to recognize the idea of the apostle in the text, viz.: That the church of Christ is many members—branches—but “one body,” in which we no longer wish to conform all churches to one model; in which we begin to perceive that there are different functions for the different denominations; and that for the highest Christian usefulness, a division into different church orders, is, or may be, as advantageous as a division of society into different classes of industries. It is only in the lowest phase of church life that one church attempts to meet all the wants, supply all the needs, and fulfill all demands of church organization.

The Episcopalians have furnished an æsthetic element; they have prevented worship from becoming bold in its simplicity, and have held up the church to the idea of public worship from which, but for them, we might perhaps have turned away

to a mere service of instruction. The Presbyterians, Baptists and Lutherans have been united in their respective bodies by their creeds, and have held the rest of the world to them. Like a light-ship at anchor, the former has swung to and fro with incoming and out-going tides, but they have served to mark the anchorage; and it is by their steadiness of doctrine that those in the freer churches, who wished to hold to the old landmark, have been aided in resisting the restless spirit of innovators. The Methodists, by the warmth of their sometimes vociferous zeal, have compelled attention from thousands whom quieter methods have failed to attract. Their hunting—like that of the Bushmen of Africa—has been at times, it is true, pretty noisy, but they have bagged game which all other methods have missed. Even the heretics have contributed something to the great fabric of truth which God is uprearing. The Unitarians by their protests against the too rigidly mathematical statements of the past have led the evangelical churches to put more reliance in spiritual life than ever before, and have indirectly, by the controversies they have awakened, both clarified and strengthened the faith of the church in a Divine Redeemer.

When King Solomon built the Temple various were the kinds of handiwork that combined in the structure. Some quarried the stones, some cut and squared them. Some felled the cedars in the forest of Lebanon, some hewed and mortised them. Some laid foundations, some built up the massive

walls. Some "worked cunningly in ornamentation," and some wove the tapestries that were to adorn it. The Temple was one, the workmen were many. So are we all working together on the same church. Methodists pioneering after virgin timber. Presbyterians laying broad and deep foundations in doctrine. Episcopalian weaving with much exquisite taste the ornamental portions of the Great House of God. Congregationalists building the doors and swinging them open wide, that whosoever loves mercy, does justly, and walks humbly before God may enter in thereat. The Baptists are fighting, both by land and water; and are marching grandly on toward the final conquest of the world. And so on, with other denominations too numerous to mention in a short sermon.

Thus there are many churches, and yet but *one* church. And thus, with all our various forms of creed and worship, we are one church.

"One family, we dwell in Him;
One church—above, beneath."

And the Universalists have certainly changed the method of presenting the doctrines of Divine punishment, while they never have, nor never *can*, eliminate the warning of it from God's Word, nor the just fear of it from the human heart! It is constantly claimed by the Roman Catholic Church that it is one, and that Protestantism leads to division, separation and schism! And this claim is asserted with so much energy that there are thousands of Protestants who really believe it. But it is not true. Liberty

has produced greater unity than despotism. The Romish Church is a unit only in name; the Protestant churches are a unit in everything else. There is more unity in doctrine, more unity in spirit, more unity in religious life in the Protestant evangelical churches than in the churches of the Papist. Of denominational controversy there is no such illustrious example as that afforded by the bitter strifes between the Jansenist and the Jesuit.

The so-called "Ecumenical Council of the Vatican" was put in bonds at its first session. Its officers were appointed for it; its business was prepared for it; its speakers were allotted to it. Everything that transpired was arranged by the "infallible" (?) Pope and his advisers. And yet, despite it all, the dome of St. Peter's re-echoed again and again with controversies the most bitter, with denunciations the most fierce—yea, with *tumults* that would have disgraced an American political convention. While the Protestant Evangelical Alliance that met in Philadelphia soon after, which was trammeled by no "rules" save those of its own making, was not marred by a single dispute.

And while the Ecumenical Conference in Washington, D. C., was somewhat diversified, yet there was *Unity in Diversity*.

For ourselves, we have no faith in the present success of any movement towards an organic union of all the branches of the Methodist Church, much less of all the Protestant churches. We doubt whether it is desirable. We are certain it is not practicable. It

is not by all becoming Presbyterians or Baptists, Lutherans or Methodists that the unity of the church is to be attained.

The "body" cannot all become head, foot, eye, or ear. The endeavor to convert each other to one way of thinking has been fully tried, and it has failed—utterly failed. We are to seek for unity, not by becoming the same in creed, church government, etc., but by recognizing each other's usefulness; and by perceiving that God in His providence has for each one of us a work which no other denomination can so successfully accomplish. Then let us be "kindly affectioned one toward another, with brotherly love."

"O, may the saints of every name
Unite to praise the bleeding Lamb!
May jars and discords cease to flame,
And all the Saviour's love proclaim,
 And give to Jesus glory."

THE TRANSCENDENT VALUE OF A GOOD NAME.

By Rev. W. H. MOORE,
Of the North Carolina Conference M. E. C., S.

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."—PROV. xxii:1.

Every man, if he has not lost his self-respect, desires to be thought well of by his associates. When a man has reached the point where he "does not care what people think of him," there is but little, if any-

thing, in him to commend him to the good opinion of others. There may come times in a man's life when he must put himself in antagonism with the majority of his associates; but a man who has no regard for a righteous public sentiment is lost to every sense of honor, and has already trod all the intermediate rounds in the ladder going down into the pit of degradation. He has reached the bottom.

Riches are not to be despised. Among the gifts of God, when properly used, they become a great blessing to him who possesses them. It is not, therefore, because of their little, but great value, that Solomon puts them in comparison with a good name, to make the value of the latter all the more conspicuous. The wise man declares, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," because it is of more value, and "loving favour" to be chosen "rather than silver and gold."

The theme furnished us by the text is: *The transcendent value of a good name.*

A good name, as used in the text, is not a name which has been popularized by some good and great man who has borne it, but stands for a good character, which draws to it the loving favor of those who are associated with him who bears the name. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." There is nothing in a name apart from the individual character of him who bears it, and of which it stands as the representative. George Washington, John Wesley, John Calvin are names repected and admired

the world over; but many a graceless wretch to whom patriotic or pious parents gave these names has died in prison, or swung from a scaffold, for infamous crimes they had committed. They bore honored names but disgraced them, and, unlike the great and good men for whom they were named, they have gone down to their graves "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

A good name, as used in the text, does not mean, I repeat, *a name only*. It stands as the symbol of a good character, or a good reputation growing out of a good character. To have a good name among men when we deserve only their reprobation, simply argues that we have been skilful hypocrites, successfully hiding our real self behind a semblance of virtuous life; or that those associated with us have been too obtuse to see our real character when it has been exposed. A hypocrite is essentially a man who has built up a good reputation on the *semblance* of a good character, for he is one who imitates another.

A good reputation is not to be despised by any man; but we must never forget that character is everything. Shakespeare has written many good things, but nothing that breathes a worthier sentiment than that in the following lines:

"Good name in man and woman, * * *
Is the immediate jewel of their souls; [ing:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something—noth-
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

There is a wealth of wisdom in this saying of a quaint old writer: "Be wondrous wary of your first comportment. Get a good name, and be very tender of it afterwards, for it is like the Venice glass, quickly cracked, never to be mended, though patched it may be." And take along with you this fable: "Fire, Water, and Fame went to travel together. They consulted that if they lost one another how they might meet again. Fire said, 'Where you see smoke, there you will find me.' Water said, 'Where you see marsh and low grounds, there you shall find me.' Fame said, 'Take heed how you lose me; for, if you do, you will run a great risk never to meet me again—there is no retrieving of me.'" A single mean act may destroy a good name which it has taken a lifetime to establish, and when once lost it may never be regained.

The good name which is rather to be chosen than great riches is a good name resulting from a good or a religious character. Few will deny the truth taught us in the text, and yet many are running counter to it in the every-day affairs of life. Ours is a material age. We hear men talking of "development," but it is all of a material kind—mines, increase of crops, fine colts, and large hogs. "Trusts," "combines" and "syndicates" are words that have become as familiar to us as our A B C's. We are losing sight of the greater good in a wild race after the lesser one. Great riches in silver and gold, houses and lands, are swallowing up and blinding us to the greater good—a good character. I may not

hope to effectually dam this stream which runs with the force of a torrent, but I would, with God's help, cast a pebble that may impede if it cannot arrest its flow. To do this—

1. *Let us compare the relative worth of a good name and great riches as commercial values.* A dollar has a specific value. It will purchase so much, and no more. But "great riches" put one in possession of all the purchasable good the world has to give and which we have the capacity to enjoy. With "great riches" a man may load his table with the choicest food gathered from every quarter of the earth and "fare sumptuously every day." He may clothe himself in the very best apparel that man's skill can make—"in purple and fine linen." He may build him a palace for a home, and furnish it with the luxurious appointments of a king. With "great riches" he may buy the beauty of womanhood to superintend his household affairs and fill the position of a wife. With "great riches" he may buy all that will gratify "the lusts of the flesh, and the desire of the eye and the pride of life." And here he must stop. Riches have only a marketable value, and when they have purchased what is in the market, then they have reached their limit.

But "a good name" is better capital than money, and in the marts of trade "loving favor is better than silver and gold."

One of the axioms of the world of trade is that "it takes money to make money." This is true in part, but only in part. It is one of those deceptive half-

truths that seem to be whole truths, and all the worse for that fact. It is true that a man must have capital on which to trade if he would accumulate; but it is not true that money is the only capital on which a successful business may be done.

Some men have amassed fortunes by grinding the faces of the poor, and in other ways have grown rich by combining their capital against the less fortunate; but all their wealth has not been able to purchase for them the esteem and good-will of their fellow-men. Honorable men reprobate their conduct, and think no more of them because they are rich. We call such men *hogs*, to express our contempt for them and the methods by which they have grown rich.

Stewart, "the merchant prince," who crushed without conscience, and with an iron hand, all who rivaled him in business, died without a tear to moisten the sod above him, and the world has no concern whether his bones now rest in the vault made for their reception, or are bleaching in the fathomless caves of the ocean. Hutchinson "cornered" the market, and by the rise in breadstuffs made a million; but his victims, out of whose mouths the bread was taken, hold and will forever hold him in detestation.

Love gets everything. Character is made, not bought. It is the product of the sweat we have dropped on the world's hard anvil while forging out the lives we have lived, and is valuable in proportion to the goodness we have put into it. A good name brings to us loving favor from the world, and

the just esteem of men is worth more than great riches in silver and gold.

A young man with a widowed mother to care for was engaged to run the elevator in a city hotel. He did his work well and to the entire satisfaction of his employer. Saturday night came, and with it the pay for his week's work and an order to attend on Sunday to do his usual work. He looked at the money which had been paid him and thought how much it would help his mother, then thought of the violation of the holy Sabbath and the displeasure of Him he had been taught to honor. His eyes filled with tears as he said to his employer, "My mother needs the money, but I cannot work on Sundays." "Then I will get some one else to do it. If you are not here in the morning, you need not come any more," was the answer he received. The youth dashed the tears from his eyes and passed out at the door carefully watched by a stranger, who, standing by, had heard and seen all that had transpired. It was sad for the son as he laid his week's wages in the lap of his mother and told her he was to lose his place. He lost it, for, instead of returning to work, the next morning he went to the Sabbath-school. Early Monday morning the stranger who had seen him leave the hotel Saturday night called at the place and got his address. He wanted a boy, a boy with "a good name," and he secured this one at better wages than he received at the hotel; and now he is a member of the firm, rich in worldly goods, and held in loving favor by all who know him.

Believe me when I tell you, after wide observation, that in market-value to a business man a good name is the better part of his capital. I had rather begin life on a back street with five hundred dollars and a good name as capital, than to have an eligible site with five thousand dollars and a bad reputation to start with.

2. *Let us try their comparative value in social life.* It is lamentably true that some men and some women are willing to sell themselves, body and soul, for money; but what man whose society is worth counting, or whose society is worth keeping, desires, or values, the interchange of social courtesies, much more the intimate companionship, of such people?

A true man does not disesteem another because he is poor, nor does he hold him in regard simply because he is rich; he does not honor the person of the mighty, or disparage that of the lowly. To him:

“Honor and shame from no condition rise.”

A man may have “great riches” and be bankrupt in character; but such a man is too sordid in his life to be held in esteem by noble-minded and virtuous people. I know it is often thought, and it is sometimes said, “A man can do anything with money,” and that “he can associate with whom he pleases, if he be rich.” But is that true? Are riches alone a passport to the best social circles of the world? Let the man who has tried it and been successful (if there be one) rise and testify.

It is not denied that gold may buy a man place and prominence among some people. But what kind of people are they? It only procures admission to that part of society whose circle is composed of people as sordid as himself, and who are regarded by the thinking, and the good, as being altogether unworthy the esteem of virtuous men. We call such people *hogs* in common speech, and would find as much of pleasure in the associations of a pig-stye as in the homes and society of men who measure others by the size of their bank accounts or the fullness of their pocket-books.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches as a passport to the best social circles. There is but one aristocracy in the world that is worth anything, and that is not of blood, or money, but of virtue. This brings together all the good elements of the world, and binds them together in bonds of purity, as the one essential thing to membership in its ennobling circle; and any other is not worthy to be woven into a door-mat on which for these to wipe their feet.

3. *Try it in the sphere of the affections.* Love is the noblest of all the affections of the soul, if it find pleasure and satisfaction in that which is noble. It cannot be bought; its price is above rubies. Love demands to be paid in its own coin, and it will take no other.

A woman of avaricious spirit may by the sacred rite of the marriage bond sell her body to a man, only for the privilege of using his money to gratify

her pride; but, in such a case, the union being a mercenary one, there can be no union of hearts, and none of the holy aspirations that are kindled alone by love. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Love gives zest to the appetite and makes the coarser fare of the poor man sweeter to the taste, and more nourishing to the body, when eaten in love, than the daintier fare of his rich neighbor on whose table the stalled ox is placed and eaten in an angry spirit. The truth is, there is no enjoyment in life which love does not heighten. It is the best sauce for every dish, a passport to the best social state, and enriches us with that which no amount of money can procure—the loving favor of those who are worthy of our esteem.

I shall close this sermon with the question: Do you accept as true this statement of Holy Writ that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches;" and that "loving favour is better than silver and gold?" If so, then, a good name, a righteous character, will be the chief object of your life. It is the pearl of great price which a man having found is warranted in selling all he has to buy the field in which it is found. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left

hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her."

A boy was apprenticed to a Quaker to learn the tanner's trade. The condition of service expressed by the Quaker was: "Thee shall do as well by me as I do by thee." The boy was so faithful he won his employer's confidence. He was honest, good-natured and industrious. Before the expiration of his apprenticeship the Quaker said to him one day, "Henry, I think of making thee a present when thy time is out. I can not tell thee what it shall be, but it shall be worth more than a hundred pounds."

Great expectations were kindled in the young man's mind, and many surmises made as to what the present would be. The day the apprenticeship expired the Quaker took the young man to his father, and said, "Henry, I will now give thee thy present." Then, turning to Henry's father, he said: "Thy son is the best boy I ever had in my employ." Glancing back at Henry he continued, "This is thy present, Henry—a good name."

The golden dreams of Henry vanished. He stood silent, sad, disappointed. But his father answered, "I would rather hear you say that of my son than see you give him all the money you are worth, for a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

May you recognize the value of a good name, and seek it above all worldly good.

THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD.

By Rev. J. W. CARTER, D. D.

Of the First Baptist Church, Raleigh, N. C.

"The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."—PSALMS cxix : 72.

The Psalms are inspired hymns. They were written by David and other Hebrew poets who were guided in thought and speech by the Spirit of God. They were also set to music and sung in the worship of ancient times. In some respects the most striking of all the Psalms is the one hundred and nineteenth. Not only is it the longest of them, but it is peculiar in form and construction. You notice that it is divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each. At the head of each section you find a strange word. These twenty-two words which puzzle so many English readers are the names of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; and in the Hebrew language the eight verses of each section begin with the Hebrew letter, the name of which stands at the head of the section. The eight verses of the first division all begin with Aleph, which is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the eight verses of the second section all begin with Beth, the second Hebrew letter; and this arrangement runs through the entire Psalm until we come to Yan, which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

This remarkable Psalm not only gives us the truth, but states it in a striking, taking way. The general subject of the Psalm is the Word of God.

How the heaven-guided poet exalts the precious Word, and exhorts us to love, seek, study and practice it! Almost every verse of the long Psalm is a direct reference to God's Word under some one of the various names by which it is known. How much is said about "the law," "the precepts," "the statutes," "the teachings," "the judgments," "the testimonies," and "the commandments" of the Lord. Our text declares the supreme value of the inspired Word. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

The writer of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm never saw a complete Bible. Since he lived much of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament have been added. Since his time the greatest events of the ages have occurred. Faithful prophets have lived, and taught, and written, and died. Jesus Christ has come into the world, walked and talked with men, preached his wonderful sermons, taught the way of salvation, died on the Cross for our sins, come forth from the grave in triumph, and gone up to the Father's right hand. The Apostles and other inspired men have traveled, preached and suffered. In addition to their other labors, they also wrote the Gospels and Epistles. Our Bible is not only larger in size, but it is far broader, clearer and fuller in its teachings than the Bible of the good man who wrote the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm. But he said: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." If his little imperfect Bible was so precious to him, surely our larger, fuller Bible ought to be vastly more precious to us.

The subject about which I want to talk to you is "The Greatest Book in the World." It is not claimed that the Bible is the *largest* book. Compared with the five thousand arid pages of Comte's Philosophy, or with some other books that might be named, it is not a large book. You can buy a copy of it for twenty-five cents, carry it in your vest pocket and read it through in a few weeks. But it is the greatest book. It is the Word of God through men to men. It gives us God's thoughts in human speech. We live in a book-making age. More men and women write books to-day than ever before. Never before were books so common and cheap as they are now. One of the great facts of the present time is the enormous production of books in all civilized countries. Thousands and tens of thousands of new books are given to the public every year. School books, books of travel, books of fiction, books on theology, history and philosophy, books on all aspects of science and all branches of industry, books on all special subjects and theories, books in prose and poetry, and in all written languages, are poured forth in ever-growing numbers from countless presses. Almost three thousand years ago the wise man said: "Of making many books there is no end." (Ecclesiastes xii:12.) What would he say now? What would he think, if he could come back to this world, visit the book-making centers, go through the great publishing houses, compute the immense capital they control, consider the labor and machinery they employ in the manufacture of books, and

behold the vast masses of finished product? How he would be startled! Surely he would exhaust the strength of language in vain efforts to express his surprise. What becomes of all the books? Who buys them? Who reads them? What is done with them? But without any unjust reflection upon any other book, I insist that the Bible is the greatest of all books. It is greater than all others because it teaches some vastly important truths which we can not get from any other book. Without the Bible we would be ignorant of some of the weightiest and most solemn facts which man ever heard or God ever taught. Let us see.

1. *Our knowledge of the origin and of the moral condition of man comes from the Bible.* It is the book which gives us the clearest, truest account of man's creation and destiny. We find ourselves in this world. We know that we came from *somewhere*. Mysteries press upon us from all around. But we have capacity to investigate. We can study the workings of our own minds. We can explore many departments of Nature. We can produce telescopes; search the heavens, and weigh and measure the stars. We can make microscopes and examine the minute things of earth. We can read the strange records which are written upon the rocks, and learn what they have to say about the beginnings of plant life and animal life.

But all the time some hard questions keep coming up in our minds and calling for answers. What are we? Whence came we? Whither go we? Where did we come from? What are we here for, and

where are we going? When we seek an answer to these and kindred questions, where shall we find it? Nature can give no response. The earth is dumb. The stars in heaven are silent. The ocean with its swarming life rolls back no reply. The grave is voiceless. But the Bible comes to our relief. It tells us that God made man in His own image, looked upon him in his early innocence, and saw that he was good. Then man was not the product of blind chance, or the lucky result of unmeaning accident, but he was the holy creation of the holy God. In the lustrous beauty of stainless purity he walked the sinless earth. It was his delight to worship and serve the Spiritual and Eternal God. But a sad change came. Man sinned and fell. When he violated the perfect law, he corrupted his moral nature and plunged into guilt, and now wherever we find him, we can see that he is a fallen creature. He is often false, often dishonest, often cruel, often a bloody butcher, often a fierce robber, often a dark-minded idolater, and always and everywhere selfish and guilty. The picture which the great apostle gives in Romans and Ephesians of our natural condition is dark and repelling. But it is terribly true. No thoughtful student of human nature can deny it. The man who says it is a slander, is either too ignorant to recognize the truth when he sees it, or too guilty to confess it when he knows it. Now the Bible is a specially useful and supremely necessary book, because it is the only book which explains our origin, describes our present moral condition, and teaches other great practical facts.

2. *It is also the best and fullest revelation of God.* Nature suggests that there is a God, and that He is a being of infinite power and wisdom. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." (Ps. xix : 1, 2.) But we want to know more of God than we can learn from the changeable earth and distant stars. The knowledge which we get from Nature is good enough as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. It is sufficient to excite our interest, but not sufficient to satisfy the deepest cravings of our souls. Where shall we find more knowledge? Here again the Bible comes to our relief. When we study its pages, we learn not only that there is a great and glorious God, the Creator and Upholder of all things, the Almighty and All-wise, the Eternal and Immutable, but we also find that "*God is love.*" What a precious and thrilling fact! Nature could never teach it. Sometimes when we possess good health, live in comfort, look upon calm skies and lovely landscapes, and are pleased with ourselves and others, it is easy to believe that God loves us. But the reverse is also true. When we are shattered by disease, when our friends sicken and die, when our hearts are stricken and desolate, when our property is destroyed, when the cyclone sweeps over the land and leaves wreck and death in its track, or when the earthquake shakes down cities, and we stand amid the ruins of our loved homes, then we doubt and question the love of God, and are not satisfied with the testimony of Nature.

We ask, Does God loves us? What are His relations to us? Is He pleased with the little services that we can offer? Will He accept us in Christ, and finally save us? When these and other anxious questions besiege our troubled hearts, no reply comes from earth or ocean. Nature is as silent as the grave. But the Written Word answers and tells us that "God is love." (1 John iv:8.) He so loved the world; this wicked and condemned world; this sinning, sighing, suffering world; this blood-drenched and tear-stained world; this world so full of aching hearts and weeping eyes—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii:16.)

In Nature I see the outer robe of God, and I admire its beauty and grandeur. But in the Bible, I see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. iv:6). I also hear Him speaking to me; sometimes, it is true, in solemn and awful tones, but again in sweetest accents of truest love. In Nature I see the hand of God. Perhaps I touch it, but it is a cold hand. I almost shrink from it. In the Bible I also see the hand of God; but it is a warm hand, and it is stretched down to me. I grasp it, and I feel that it thrills me with life and love. Ah! more than that. In the Bible I behold the face of God, and it is a face of wondrous loveliness. And as I gaze upon it, I feel the throbings and warmth of His infinite loving heart, beating in deathless sympathy with fallen humanity. Do we truly rejoice in the revelation which God has given of Himself, that we may

know and love Him, and seek and enjoy the things which are pure and high? If we do, we must value and exalt the Book which contains this precious revelation.

3. *We are indebted to the Bible for all the knowledge that we have of the future world.* We know that we are here now; but it is certain that we are passing away. The grave yawns darkly before us. Insatiate death is on our track, and in swift pursuit of us; and before many years it will drag us down into the shadowy regions of the unnumbered dead. Is it not natural that we should want to know something about the world to which we are going? In all times and countries men have longed, thirsted and panted for immortality. Often, amid the labors and strivings of the present life, it has seemed to them that they could feel the restless throbings of the Immortal within themselves. Millions, staggering under the burdens of earth, have hoped that some message-bearer from the eternal world would come to them bringing the knowledge for which their hearts ached. Many men and women have been so anxious to get news from their departed friends that they have become converts to modern Spiritualism, and professed belief in its absurd pretensions and stupid impostures. Suppose that at the present time a number of people like Lazarus, the young man of Nain, and the daughter of Jarius should be raised from the dead and brought back to life. Suppose that they should bring with them a clear knowledge of the life beyond. Would there

not be a great rush of the multitudes to see and hear them? and would they not be besieged with eager questions? Suppose that they should meet in a congress to exchange experiences, tell what they had heard and seen in the other world, and discuss the conditions of life which exist there. Would not a tremendous interest be taken in that congress? What crowds would want to attend it, and what careful arrangements would be made to report every word that might be spoken. In attendance and interest the occasion would completely eclipse the Minneapolis and Chicago Conventions.

But there is a Book which does convey to us some information concerning the future state. It tells us of wondrous things which our earthly eyes have not yet seen. It teaches that death does not end all; that beyond this vale of tears there is an endless life; and that the righteous will rejoice forever with Christ in glory, while the finally wicked will be hopelessly banished from the presence of the holy God. The knowledge which the Bible imparts is not full and minute. It is not enough to gratify our curiosity, or to answer all the questions that men may ask. But it is sufficient to enable us to make the best of life in this world. When we think of death and of the life beyond death, and can find nothing in Nature or human philosophy to satisfy the anxious longings of our souls, is it not refreshing to know that there is one Book in which God declares His unchanging love to His people, and tells them something of their duty and destiny? Surely the Book which rescues

us from darkness and uncertainty is the best and greatest of books.

4. *The Bible also teaches us how to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, and to win heaven.* If it simply showed us that we were lost and helpless sinners, and then left us in our ruined state, without revealing to us any way or hope of escape, or offering us any help, it would merely mock and taunt us. It would only aggravate our misery. But it does nothing of the kind. In the Gospel we have an inspired record of the birth, and life, and labors, and toils, and teachings, and sufferings, and death, and resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. He is the all-perfect Son of the most high God. He is the brightness of the Father's "glory, and the express image of His person." (Hebrews i: 3.) "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Timothy i: 15.) There is a sense in which it may be said that He took our place under God's law, suffered and died for us, and rose from the dead and went up to heaven for us; and now salvation in His name may be preached to all people. The ringing invitations of cross-bearing, blood-sweating, thorn-crowned, bleeding, dying love are addressed to sinners everywhere. We are all exhorted to repent of our wickedness, look to Christ in faith and come into union with Him; and are told that if we will commit ourselves to Him for time and eternity, our sins will be freely forgiven, and we will be "accepted in the Beloved," and finally welcomed to heaven.

We are always anxious to get relief from earthly sufferings. When we are stricken with physical disease we seek healing. It is our nature to do all that we can to prolong our lives. Should we not be still more earnest and diligent in our strivings to obtain everlasting life. A recent letter from St. Petersburg describes a wild craze which prevailed in the Capitol of the Russian Empire a few months ago. Major Gatchkowsky, an army officer, returned from Asia, where he had spent some years. He had marvellous stories to tell. He reported that in his long travels he had passed through that unknown and mysterious country which the world calls Thibet. It was his boast that he had visited a region which no European had ever seen before. In a large section of that strange land he noticed that the people never died, and were never sick. He tried to learn the secret of their immortal health and youth. But for a long time they refused to tell him. But he waited and hoped, and finally his patience was rewarded. A bright young man of four or five hundred years took a special interest in him because he came from the Empire of the great Czar, and gave him the secret by which they baffled disease and death. The infallible remedy was a life-giving elixir, which was injected into the veins of the people. The accommodating young man also explained the process by which the precious elixir was made. Here was a man who, in abundant fertility of imagination, could even surpass the patent-medicine men of our own country. He went back to St.

Petersburg, told his story, and was believed. He claimed that he possessed the secret of life and death. The people thronged his office. They gathered around him in eager crowds. They would hardly give him time to sleep. Not only did the common people come, but bankers, millionaires, princes, nobles and Grand Dukes, all swelled the human tide. The Czar sent for his son, whose health was poor, to receive the new treatment. For a few weeks the Major coined money more rapidly than our mint at Philadelphia. But his career was brief. Two prominent men, into whose blood the death-preventing elixir had been injected, died suddenly. Then a fierce reaction came. A great uproar was raised, and Major Gatchkowsky fled to save his life. The poor deluded people in their reckless efforts to secure immortal life in this world of trial and temptation, poured their money freely into the pockets of a daring swindler. Oh that men were as ready to be saved as they are to be humbugged! With what ceaseless diligence we should labor for the life of "peace with God" and everlasting blessedness. But we find multitudes who "neglect the great salvation" and reject the Christ of the gospel. Many who passed through the years of youth, and are now going down the western slopes of the hill of life are still living "without God in the world." Some of them, with whitened hair and furrowed cheeks, are still hardening their hearts against the Saviour and striving against the Holy Spirit. Let us "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matthew

vi:33.) Eternal life is a priceless possession and an endless and glorious inheritance. Therefore the Bible, which reveals to us the method by which it is to be secured, is a book of mighty and measureless value.

Now, finally, the Bible contains God's directions for our guidance in our earthly lives. It is not a book of minute details and petty by-laws, but rather a book of great facts and principles. While it convicts us of grievous sin and flagrant folly, it also credits us with some intelligence. Not many years ago a bill to abolish gambling was proposed and discussed in the Kentucky Legislature. A man who was supposed to have sense enough to be a member of the Legislature opposed the bill. He argued that gambling was not wrong because there was nothing in the Bible against it. He said that he had read the Good Book through and could find no text which said "Thou shalt not gamble." Perhaps there are other men who are as foolish as that Kentucky legislator. Some people think that they have a right to do anything not specifically forbidden in God's Word. But they mistake the character and methods of the Book. It never paints a perfect picture of a horse and then writes under it in large letters, "This is a horse." Some books may do that, but the Bible never does.

Of course it contains positive commandments which should be reverently obeyed, and many precious promises which should be gladly believed. But it is especially and pre-eminently the book of Chris-

tian facts and principles. When we study its pages carefully, we find great principles which are stated in strong and striking language, and illustrated by the most impressive examples; and we are expected to take these principles and apply them to the varied affairs and practical questions and duties of every-day life. The medical and scientific books of former ages are now outgrown. At the present time they would be regarded as the relics of barbarism. But the Bible is never antiquated. It is as well suited to one generation as another, because it declares great spiritual truths with which all men should be familiar, and teaches great spiritual principles by which all people of all colors and countries should regulate their conduct. We need it not only in our homes and mouths, but especially in our hearts. The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. cxix : 11.) If all the millions of our great country would take the Bible as their guide and teacher, and live in contented obedience to its precepts and principles, a glorious moral revolution would quickly follow. Our people would be vastly better and happier than they are. Real estate would be worth more, crops would be larger, business would be more prosperous, the health of the people would be improved, and there would not be a criminal or a pauper in this mighty republic. This would be "Immanuel's land," and we would be a "nation whose God is the Lord." Verily, our country would be a suburb of heaven itself. Surely the Bible, which can exercise such hallowed

influences, and do so much for the moral uplifting of humanity, is a most wonderful book.

Is it not the greatest of books? Myriads of books have been given to the restless world, but in permanent value the Bible rises far above all other books, because it is the only book which sheds a clear light upon the hardest, darkest problems of human life; the only one which gives us any definite idea of our exalted origin and moral state; the only book in which God reveals Himself to us as our Father and Saviour; the only book in which we catch bright, sweet glimpses of the eternal realities of the future world; the only book which teaches "the way of salvation," and the only book which defines the relations which we sustain to God and to each other in the present life.

It was the joy and delight of the ancient Psalmist. The portions of it which he possessed were more to him "than thousands of gold and silver." But what is the Bible in its fullness and completeness to us who live now? Do we give it the chance that such a book should have? Do we receive it as God's Holy Word and bow to its authority? If we merely linger around its outer edges, or speculate upon its mysteries, we may derive little or no benefit from it. But if we come to it with an earnest desire to know the truth and perform our duty, and a fixed intention to do the will of God, it will be to us the Book of Books. It will pour the light of heaven into our souls and upon our pathway, and will lead us onward and upward until, leaving the labors and sorrows of earth

behind us, we will pass through the open gates of glory and enter the kingdom of everlasting blessedness.

THE MODEL LAYMAN—PHILEMON.

By Rev. J. W. JENKINS,

Of the North Carolina Conference M. E. C., S..

Sometimes, in the course of our ministrations, it is well to preach on Christian character—to present religion in life. To preach of Abraham, Moses and Paul is very common. But we think that it would be well to take humbler characters. Those characters tower so far above the common people that they dare not aspire to imitate them. But when one from the common walks of life is placed before them, it will be an inspiration.

I propose to talk of the master of Onesimus, the friend of Paul and of preachers. We have a limited field to glean from. Only one short chapter of twenty-five verses, and nearly half of that written about others—ten verses about the servant and about as many about the master; and yet these few lines present a picture of a lovely character and a beautiful home. May the Father help me to delineate that character and to picture that home!

He was a most lovable man in Paul's mind. He thanked God for him, and always remembered him in his private devotions. He also had great joy and consolation in the love of so good a man. The first

thing that attracts our attention is his love—(verse 5)—love to God. “Love is of God,” and “God is love.” We love Him because He first loved us. He evidently had the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost sent down from above. That love for God which enabled him to keep all of Christ’s commandments. A pure and heavenly flame that transfused the soul, and thrilled it with a divine joy. A love that effloresced in a heavenly conversation and an active Christian life; that inspired to noble, Christ-like deeds. The love that sent Paul to fight with beasts at Ephesus, and Peter to the martyr’s cross. Love to the saints. The evidence of a genuinely converted soul. “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” Of course he loved his race—His Master loved them and gave His life for a lost and ruined world. So every Christian that truly loves God will love all for whom Jesus died—will take the whole world into his heart. But, then, blood is thicker than water. “The world will love its own and them *only*,” said Mr. Wesley. We must love our own, but not them only. Take the world into the heart, but the brethren into its warmest chamber. Jesus loved John the best, and committed his weeping, widowed mother to his loving care. We have a common birth, a common Saviour, a common Father, and a common heritage—how can we help having a common love? O, for more love for one another amid the trials, temptations and sorrows of life! How it would light up our homes and cheer our hearts amid life’s chilling

gloom. Whence came this love? It sprang from a living faith. He had faith in God. Evidently, not merely mental belief, but a trust of the heart. *Saving* faith. The indispensable means of salvation. The faith that lends its realizing light; that brings the Invisible in sight; that enables us to look away to Calvary and to hang all our hopes upon the Cross. To emerge out of Nature's night into the marvelous light and liberty of God's dear children. To arise and shine, our light being come, and the glory of God risen upon us. That faith which grows stronger and stronger while the days are going by; that makes a man mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; that nerves him for every conflict of life, and causes him to triumph on every field of fight; that overcomes the world, the flesh and the devil, and that at last smites the grim monster and lays its mighty hand upon the golden gates of glory and ushers us into the presence of God. Faith in the brethren. In these times, when man is losing confidence in his fellow, it is pleasant to study the life of a man free from suspecting the saints. Woe to the world when every man is so mean that he suspects everybody else of being mean like himself. There have been honest people in all the ages, and there will be to the end of the world. Mutual confidence is a beautiful thing. How sweet to be able to trust a friend. Nothing is so hurtful to the influence of the church as mistrust among its members. To keep each other's confidence, let us make ourselves worthy of it. The man that has faith in God must

have it in God's children. As a result of this *love* and faith, "Philemon was faithful in good things" (verse 7). Wherefore, by their fruits you shall know them. The light must shine. The faith must work. His soul was full of sympathy. He refreshed the bowels of the ministry, and of course of the saints.

The world needs sympathy. Many a heart is languishing, breaking for it. There is no sadder refrain that breaks from the human soul than that of David when he cries, "No man cared for my soul!" A touch of sorrow makes the world akin. It wins when every other means fails. Who can stand before its soft, subduing power. It is the essence of mercy and distills its sweetness like the evening dew. He was obedient to authority (verse 21). Not only willing to obey, but to do more than was required. Willing to work with and under others. The church of to-day is suffering for the want of working laymen. Men and women that will work where they are—that will do the nearest thing at hand. That will co-operate with the pastor. That will talk and sing and pray. That will lend a helping hand. The harvest is white, but the laborers are few. The fields of the world will never be reaped until the laity take hold.

He was a communicative man (verse 6). Religion was the best thing in the world to him. It was the pearl of great price. The treasure of the field. He had a good thing, and wanted others to have it too. He had the clear light, the higher life, the peace that passeth understanding, the heartfelt joy, the

abiding faith, the glorious hope, the thrilling love and the blessed assurance. He did not hide his light under a bushel. He let it shine, that others might be guided to the Father. Methodists formerly talked their religion. But the class-meeting is largely a thing of the past, and we are religious dummies. We are ready to talk of everything else. We wag our tongues eternally in worldly things, often in frivolity and sometimes in sin. We meet our fellows along the highways, or sit with them in our homes, and never part our lips about the things of greatest concern. "Just a word for Jesus;" how much good it would do. We have all heard of the infidel blacksmith who was led to Christ by a plain, honest man who approached him and simply said, "I am deeply concerned for your soul." God help us to speak it out, to tell it, tell it again till no one shall say of the children of men, "No one has ever told me before." Tell it humbly, tell it gently, tell it earnestly.

He dispensed a liberal, benevolent hospitality. A hospitality not only to his friends, but those who would never be able to return it in kind. The pious maiden, Apphia, in her works of faith and labor of love, and the superannuated minister, Archippus, found a happy home with him. Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Lucas had found a pleasant lodging there, and Paul had rested his weary body upon his downy beds, and he longed to lodge again amid its sweet influences. This beautiful Southland was once noted for its princely hospitality. The world

knew nothing to beat it. Things have changed. Our fortunes have been swept away. Of course we cannot keep up the style of former days. But I am happy to say, from blessed experience, that our people's hearts and homes are still open wide to entertain not only their friends, but strangers. May they never be closed! May the time never come when God's ministers and God's poor shall not find ready admission into our Christian homes! "He that giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple in my name shall not lose his reward," said Jesus. A stranger knocked at the parsonage door early one morning and asked for a piece of bread. He was cold and dirty. Wife said come in and warm. "No," said he, "I will soil your floor." Little wee Annie asked to carry the cold lunch to the stranger. As he received it from her little dimpled hands, with beaming face and swelling bosom and quivering lips he exclaimed with deep emotion, "*God bless you!*" The aroma of that prayer rests upon my heart to this day.

He ruled his household. He evidently exercised discipline in his family. He must have been a business man.

Onesimus was not willing to submit to his regulations, yet there is no evidence that he was cruel or unreasonable. When Onesimus was converted, he was ready to return to his master and make reparation. "A man that is careless in his business will be neglectful of his religion." Business and religion are not antagonistic. Only let a man carry his reli-

gion into his every-day affairs. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," is a scriptural injunction.

Lastly, he had a church in his house (verse 2). Doubtless he was a member of some church, and yet he constituted his family into a church. Father, mother, sister, brother, servants and sojourners, all members. One, long before him, the father of the faithful, had commanded his house. Another, one of earth's bravest and best, had said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The great need of the world is home religion. This is the primitive kind. Wherever Abraham pitched his tent, there he erected an altar. A home without an altar is a house without a fire-place. Family prayer is the incense of the home; the evening and morning sacrifice, the perpetual fire that burns in the sanctuary of our homes, and sheds its light upon our minds and its glow upon our hearts.

The subject of my discourse presents to my mind a beautiful picture. I see a godly man, with heavenly light in his eyes and serenity upon his brow. The intelligent face, the firm step, all said that the elements were so mixed in him that the world might stand up and say, "This is a man." The evening shadows have fallen around his beautiful home; the business cares of the day are over, the fowls are on the perch, the flocks are in the fold and the herds are in the stall; supper is over, the time for retiring has come, the call to worship is made; the devoted wife, the bounding boys, the fair-faced

daughters, the faithful domestics and the deferential guests gather in the parlor; he takes the *Book*; he reads the Word; he strikes up some grand old hymn; wife, children, guests, servants all chime in; melting melody floats away on the night air; the trees tremble with gladness, and the very stars quiver with joy, while the angels pause in their heavenly flight and join their glad anthems to the swelling strains. The song ceases. They devoutly kneel. A soft, subdued voice ascends on high. He calls upon the Father to bless his home. To bless wife, children, servants and friends. Commits all to the care of Him who careth for him. The filial kiss, the sweet “good-night” passes around. They lie down to soft repose upon the bosom of His love, under the shadow of his wing. The sentinels of God guard the sacred scene, and the angel of peace hovers over that home.

I pen these lines upon the spot that gave me birth. A real scene akin to this comes up before me. The manly father, the meek-eyed mother, the bright, affectionate brothers and sisters, the old family Bible, the songs, the prayers; all, all are here to-day. That light has never faded from my eye; that music has never died out of my soul; they have cheered me through all my pilgrim life; they will go with me to the gates of glory. God speed the day when the family altar shall be set up in every Christian home!

* THE GROWING RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AGES.

By Rev. G. A. OGLESBY,

Presiding Elder of the North Carolina Conference M. E. C. S.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."—1 Cor. x : 11.

"The literal Greek is typically; that is illustratively." We are here presented with a type or illustration of God's method of dealing with men. World is, in the Greek, plural, making ends of the worlds. The word signifies age or dispensation; implying a cycle of time in which some great round of providence is accomplished. Hence, if the word here be rendered world, it must be understood to signify not cosmos, the material world, but a world-period, or time-world. These ages or time-worlds of sacred history can be variously measured. We may reckon the antediluvian period as world; the Patriarchal; the Mosaic and the Christian." We have here the ending of all these, or rather their converging into the present final age. This is the age for which all previous ages, as time-worlds, were framed. All previous ages find this antetype in the present age. By "all these things" we are to understand the things enumerated in this chapter. How they were under the cloud, were all baptized unto Moses, all ate the same spiritual meat, drank the same

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spiritual drink, and especially God's sore punishment of their sins.

The whole history of this people was written for our admonition, instruction. It is both representative and admonitive. Representative of God's divine superintendence, admonitive of His judgments against sin. Here we see how God wrought miracles in their defence—to free them from bondage, how He led them with a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night, fed them upon manna, gave them quails for meat, made the flinty rock to yield them water, saved them from the deadly bites of serpents, gave them victory over their enemies until the hearts of the nations melted within them at the mention of their name. Here we see how His sore judgments came upon every offender, not sparing even their leader, Moses.

"Upon whom the ends of the world are come." The idea we wish to enforce is the growing responsibility of the ages. God expects more of us to-day than of any previous age. All the past has come down to us. We are the heirs of these things. As we live in the last dispensation, which is the consummation of all that went before, our responsibilities are not only far greater, but the greater guilt will be incurred if we fall short of our privileges.

"I the heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time."

Chrysostom, in exile, said: "When driven from the city I cared nothing for it. But I said to myself if the Empress wishes to banish me, the earth is the

Lord's and the fullness thereof. If she would saw me in sunder, let her saw me in sunder; I have Isaiah for a pattern. If she plunge me in the sea, I remember Jonah. If she would thrust me in the fiery furnace, I see the three children enduring that. If she would cast me to the wild beasts, I call to mind Daniel in the den of lions. If she would stone me, let her stone me; I have before me Stephen the protomartyr. If she would take my head from me, let her take it; I have John the Baptist. If she would deprive me of my worldly goods, let her do it; naked came I into the world and naked shall I return." From this we see how this great and good man took courage, from illustrious examples, in whatever condition the Empress might see fit to place him.

The idea has a special application to us. — We not only have, in common with all Christians, the examples, types, as illustrations of God's power and goodness and of His condemnation of sin and sinners, but we are the heirs of the grandest movement of the ages. The grandest epoch in the world's history, excepting the coming of Christ, is the Wesleyan. Methodism was born in a prayer-meeting, it is true, but a prayer-meeting of cultured men in one of the leading institutions of England. What a mighty movement this! How these people were all on fire and yet did not lose their judgment. Every available avenue to the hearts and homes of the people was employed. Colleges were founded, churches erected, papers, magazines, tracts, pamphlets and

books were published and extensively and vigorously circulated, missionary collections were taken and missionaries sent abroad. One is disposed to overlook these facts as he reads of Wesley and Whitfield with burning eloquence moving and swaying the multitude upon the streets and in the fields. This movement—with the world, state, church and the devil against it, and not a few said the Lord was against it—stirred England from centre to circumference; so changed the machinery of government and wove itself into its institutions, that the history of England cannot be written to-day without writing the history of Methodism. England could not hold it; crossing the Atlantic it rolled down through the colonies like a sea of holy fire; and as a tidal wave of glory it found its way to the islands of the seas—holds the world in its embrace, for the sun never sets upon Methodist chapels.

Methodism is the grandest fact in this great country of ours. One-third of the people of these United States are under its influence and are allied with it.

Surely, the Lord was in this movement. To it is due, more than to all other forces combined, the great missionary movement of this century; so, largely, of the Sabbath-school movement; and the tract societies owe no little of their existence and life to Methodism. The doctrines of Spiritual regeneration, the knowledge of sins forgiven, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, are peculiar to it, and distinguish it from all others.

A grand record this. In the providence of God it has been written for our admonition. These things have come upon us. He who is ignorant of them is culpable, and he who is not stirred by them is doubly guilty. There is much here, every way, of which to boast—much to admire. We feel like taking off our hats in the presence of the men and women whom God thus honored, and through whom He wrought such wonders. But shall we wonder, admire and applaud, and not be stirred by these things? I have not called your attention to them merely to boast. It is true, I thank God that I have been accounted worthy to have part in the ministry of a church that, tried by every Scriptural test, is the most divinely appointed, heaven-favored and God-blessed church in the world, but I am not here to parade these things—to make display. We cannot live upon display. The sorriest man in the world is he who would live solely upon the achievements of his father. Of all the contemptible fellows the world is ever cursed with, he is most contemptible who parts his hair in the middle, swaggers about, talks in balderdash, and expects recognition and patronage because his father, by dint of effort, climbed from the dung-hill to the mansion. A church that relies solely upon its past record, and seeks patronage and invites men and women to become its communicants upon what it has been, without regard to what it is and gives promise of, is just as mean and contemptible.

We hear of a dead past, but the past is dead only to dead men and fools. To live men the past is ter-

ribly alive a great surging, throbbing, beating sea of life. I am no hero-worshiper, but they who read the life of John Wesley unmoved are dead indeed; or of Whitfield, and desire not the eloquence of holy fervor, are unworthy of their calling; or of Fletcher, and not desire holiness of life, are sinners of deepest dye.

It is well that we pause here and take our reckoning. Let us be honest with ourselves, as those that must give an account. As men of God, as preachers and laymen, are we up to the standard? Have we the faith, the life, the power, the fire, the zeal, the go that should characterize redeemed men and women who have become the heirs of all the grand past, and especially the heirs of that matchless display of divine grace exhibited in the Wesleyan movement? We are not only the heirs of God's grace offered in Christ to a guilty world, but the heirs of the exhibitions of it from the time of righteous Abel through the Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic and Apostolic ages, and down to this grand, glad day of ours, when the watchmen are almost ready to proclaim the coming of complete and universal victory.

If the victories of Miltiades would not suffer Themistocles to sleep, how dead must that church member be who slumbers in the presence of these things! If Cæsar's image inspired Napoleon, how unworthy those ministers and laymen who, never inspired, are always learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth!

Brethren, it is a glorious, and yet an awful thing to live in this our day—glorious to those who meet its responsibilities and opportunities, but awful to those who read but will not learn! As ministers of Christ, what sore condemnation awaits us if untrue to our mission!

I have, in the fear of God, tried to study the situation and get at the facts, and they lead to the following conclusions:

1. That there is a want of breadth of view, and an absence of faith in God and in the power of His Word. We have not looked well to the import of our marching orders. We have practically abridged the commission. The Master said, "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Our plans do not measure up to this. Practically, we have made *all* the world to mean part of it. We have gulped down the hackneyed, unscriptural dogma, that "charity begins at home." *Every* creature means some creatures. Some men are recognized as reprobates, and we never pray for them nor preach to them. We have practically limited the power of the gospel to save to children and the petted portion of the adult population. God can save the worst man in this town as easily as the boy of ten summers. But this is not our question primarily. Whether God can or cannot save, whether willing or unwilling to bestow mercy, and whether men accept or reject, we must go. God has said "*go into all the world,*" to "*every creature.*" To the poor drunkard, to the libertine, the liar, the thief, the money-shark—

all must have the gospel. No question of ours whether they come or not; God has sent us to them, and we must go or be disobedient. The question is not whether they will come, but whether we can save our souls without preaching the gospel to them. The command is *go*, and we must go or die. It may be hard and unpleasant; against our judgment, our sense of propriety; it may provoke the world's ridicule, but it is God's order and must be obeyed at all cost.

2. There is a consequent disposition to fall into ruts and become stereotyped. We do the things that are easily done and avoid difficult things. We neglect the homes that most need us, and go to the people who are going to heaven whether the preacher visits them or not. In nothing else is so much weakness displayed, so little wisdom seen. Truly the children of this world are in this generation wiser than the children of light. The physician gives medicine to the sick, we to those that are well. The politician visits and seeks to make converts from the enemy's ranks, and only visits his friends to enthuse them and point out some work for them to do. The wise general fortifies his weak points, the man of business seeks new customers and new markets for his wares. The prudent farmer stops the holes in his fence and builds up the low places. But we who ought to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves go round in regular tread-mill style. See the fence down here, the briar and bramble growing up there, the tares choking the wheat

yonder, and burden our reports with a recital of these facts, but never think of trying to correct them. This would be something new under the sun, would take us out of our way, would require us to go where there is no beaten way.

3. We are wanting in tact as *pastors*. We do not overrate the importance of revivals, but underrate the value of continued personal effort to save souls. I say we are wanting in this capacity. We are not skilled. Ministers of other churches beat us catching fish with hook and line. It does not meet the case to say we catch more than they in the long run. Our failure or success is not measured by the record of other ministers. We must do all we can, always at work, in season and out, and by every available method. Our failure here is due more to our want of skill than to our unwillingness to do work. In nothing else we do, do we so much need to heed the injunction of the apostle, "Study to make yourself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, approved of God." If you ask me how to become skilled as *pastors*, I answer I know no way except to go at it. Study men, their tempers, their dispositions, habits, and pray God to give you access to them. Let us bear in mind, brethren, that ours is a work where no task can be shunned, a warfare where flinching is not allowed. Men that will not do this work must go to the wall. We must thoroughly furnish ourselves to every good word and work, or be covered with shame, confusion and endless condemnation. "He that seeth the wolf coming and fleeth is an hireling

and not the shepherd of the sheep The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

4. Be it said to our shame, brethren, that we have not been diligent, as the Lord counts diligence, even in those things which we propose to do. It may not be charged upon preachers that they are lazy. Heaven's eternal pity be upon the man that has been trusted to watch for souls and sleeps upon his oars. The English language has no word to express my contempt for such a man. While it is true that we may not be charged with downright laziness, yet we are not the live, diligent, faithful men that our calling demands. We may count our beads and number our prayers, but we must plead guilty. The church contemplated unceasing endeavor when it gave us our authority and sent us out. It took a solemn pledge from us never to be unemployed, never to be triflingly employed; to be diligent in prayer, in the study of the Scriptures, and cheerfully and gladly do the work belonging to the office of the gospel minister. No set of men are under higher moral obligations than Methodist preachers. If the people had a right to choose their pastors, they have given it up. They are expected to receive whoever is sent, and give him moral and pecuniary support. They must needs suffer if he is heartless and unfaithful. The church has wisely arranged to guard its interests here, making such neglect an immorality.

"The member of an Annual Conference, as such, has a franchise and prerogative which a local preacher has not, and more is required of him. To him per-

tains the pastoral care and administration of discipline. There is a provision for his support by the church while in its active service; and also for his wants as a superannuated preacher, and for those of his widow and orphans. He is under vows to employ all his time in the work of God; and not only to work, but to do that part of the work and at those times and places which the church through her constituted authorities judges to be best and directs. He voluntarily continues among those subject to appointment. At any time before the laborers are assigned to the various fields, he could retire regularly. Afterwards to refuse to attend to the work assigned, is to cease to travel without the consent of the Annual Conference. This strikes a vital blow at the itinerant system. If one may do this, so may others; the appointments fall through, the congregations are dispersed, and by reason of this negligence 'great hurt and hindrance' may befall the church. He breaks his covenant with the Conference and the church; and whoever does this is liable to be broken of his office and even to be degraded from the ministry. The people surrendered their right to supply themselves with a pastor and looked to the Conference. The Conference engaged to supply them and looked to this man, and he has not fulfilled his engagement. Every itinerant is under covenant with the church for pastoral services, at least, till the next session of Conference. The church, as she values her economy, has guarded this point strongly, and whoever violates it ought to be well prepared to answer for it to his

brethren. Having refused to keep his appointment, the Conference may place him in the class of ministers who are not subject to appointment; or he may be censured by suspension; or, in an aggravated case of ministerial unfaithfulness, he may be deposed." Manual of Discipline, pages 142, 143.

5. We fail, largely, to properly appreciate the value of lay help. No preacher can succeed without the co-operation of his people. If your people, from indifference, want of information, or from any cause fail to co-operate with you, your first work is to secure this end. If a preacher remains any considerable time on a work, hauling his church in a one-horse wagon—to use Sam Jones' figure—while they ply the lash, it requires all our credulity to accept his claim to a call to the ministry. God never called a fool to preach, and he is a fool if he does not ditch such a crowd as that before he goes a mile. I have no apology for the sins of the people, but if they are not right it is our business to correct them. We are leaders, and if they do not follow it is our fault. There is a key that will unlock every heart—a plan by which every man will work. It is folly to go forward without the people, as unwise as a general charging the enemy while his men lie in camp. We must plant ourselves here and stay until we have taken the citadel. We must show the people that we mean business; that we are worthy leaders; that we are determined to succeed—and they will follow, if for no other reason, because of our importunity. We must employ the laity. We need all the force

we can command. We must point them out something to do, and see that they do it. Wesley's unprecedented success is attributable almost wholly to this fact. He put the people to work, men and women. He wisely concluded that everybody was good for something, and sought to put everyone in his proper place. A comparison of the ministry of Wesley with that of Whitfield gives us a striking illustration. In no particular was Whitfield inferior to Wesley. Strong, cultured, systematic, faithful, eloquent—almost without a peer as a preacher of the Word—crowds flocked to hear him, and souls were converted by the hundred under his ministry. But he did not organize. Wesley did. The Wesleyan Methodists are counted by the million to-day, while there is only a handful of Whitfield Methodists. Indeed, Whitfield would be without organic representation in the world to-day, had not Lady Huntington organized some of his converts into classes—after Wesley's plan—and built them chapels.

I would speak further touching this question, and show the importance of employing the laymen in all departments of church work, especially in prayer and class-meetings, Sabbath-schools, mission societies, and make special reference to woman's work for missions, but we hope to have these questions discussed later in the Conference.

6. Again, brethren, I fear we have not tarried at Jerusalem until we have been endowed with power. We have gone a warfare on our own charges, have trusted too much to purely human means. We have

not felt our need of the holy anointing. There is an absence of the old-time power. We have more culture in the aggregate, perhaps, but less power, more that is purely human and less of the divine. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and then witnesses unto me." If the disciple apostle who had been trained by the Master Himself needed this power, verily we need it. Human nature is the same, sin is just as deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, the obstructions to the progress of the gospel, though different, are as numerous and formidable now as then. The devil is no less a devil because appearing in the form of an angel of light, and has not abated one iota of his efforts to damn immortal souls. As ministers we need the baptism of the spirit, power from above. To go without it is the purest folly, is to violate the divine order.

1. We need it to sanctify us, cleanse us from sin. It is one office of the spirit to give purity. The very emblems employed to represent Him convey this idea. Fire, air and water, all signify purity. "He shall baptize you," said John, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whose fan is in his hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor." As men of God, ambassadors of Christ, we must be pure men, pure in thought, word and deed. Our characters should be as transparent as crystal. We should reflect the glory of God.

I stopped a short time since at Cape Hatteras light-house, one of the most important light-houses on the

Atlantic coast. The building is two hundred feet high, a magnificent structure. The lens, of several hundred pieces, alone cost two thousand dollars. The object is to keep the sailor from wrecking his craft on the Diamond Shoals, some twelve miles away, a sea in which no boat will live long. But with nothing was I more struck than with the cleanliness of every thing. It is the cleanest place I have seen in North Carolina, not only in the light-house itself, but in the homes of the keepers there is the utter absence of dust, stains and every thing of the sort. In the kitchens, bed-rooms, sitting-rooms, every where your eye falls there is cleanliness. Why is this? First of all, the keepers are nice, cleanly people. Then the government requires it, and an inspector visits the place, often comes when not expected, to see that it is done. Why all this care and expense? The purpose is to prevent the loss of life and property. The finest lens in the world would be unable to throw its light out to sea if covered with dust. But why be so cleanly and neat in their dwellings, which are some seventy-five yards from the light-house? Because if not free from dust in their homes they will carry it with them into the light-house. If this care and painstaking be necessary to prevent the loss of life and property, how pure and spotless ought we to be who watch for souls. How careful that our light always burns brightly. If we do not keep pure in our homes and among our people we will not be pure in the pulpit. If our souls be covered with the dust of sin during

the week, we will bring the dust into the pulpit on the Sabbath to obscure the light of divine truth.

2. But we need the baptism of the Spirit to give power. "And ye shall receive *power* after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." I stood, a few days since, beside the casket that contained the remains of a sweet little girl, while a devoted brother bent over her form and sobbed aloud with grief. Except the pallor upon the cheek, there was every sign of life. She looked as if only asleep. Every feature was perfect, and the little lips looked as if ready to speak. But it was only the form of the little girl's real self. The spirit was gone, and there was no power there. Likewise, we may have the form of godliness, culture, clerical coats, clerical airs, holy tones, much eloquence; may have the best church machinery in the world, every accomplishment, every appliance, but if without the Spirit we are dead, powerless, useless. "We are as salt without its savor, fit only for the dunghill." The absence of power implies weakness. The absence of a life-giving implies a life destroying quality. A minister without this qualification is a disgrace to his calling, and will leave a trail of death everywhere he goes. We must so preach the Word as to save ourselves and them that hear us. To lose our congregations is to lose our own souls. With this power we can take this country for Chirst; without it, we can stand and gaze and wonder and perish, see it perish and perish with it.

A thousand-and-one remedies are offered to put the church in first-class shape for work: one wants more education, more culture; another, better houses of worship, others think certain changes in the laws would relieve all difficulties. These things are not to be despised, but the need of needs is the Spirit of God—power from above. The ministers need it, the church needs it, and we must have it, or sinners will go to hell by the thousand, and we with them. You may call it the second blessing, the tenth or the twentieth, but we need it. We are out of harmony with God's rule without it. A few humble fishermen, ignorant and unlearned, were invincible with it; were cowards without it. Peter, without it, denied his Lord; with it endured stripes, imprisonment and death.

We may not, dare not, go to this work without preparation, the best we can make, all that study and prayer will supply, coupled with God-given power. The warrior is prepared for the battle, drilled at school, in camp, and not only supplied with the munitions of war, but his soul is fired with patriotism and ambition. He fills himself with the heroic deeds of the great warriors until he pants for the field of conflict, and longs to wear the laurels of victory. The statesman is prepared for his work; the architect spends years in preparation, so of the artist, the teacher, the physician. Much more should we, for ours is a far more important and more difficult work than theirs.

Finally, my brethren, the fact that ours is the noblest, the most exalted of callings, and the cer-

tainty of ultimate success, should beget diligence, enthusiasm, zeal.

Stimulated by all the hallowed influences that pour down upon us from every age of the past, inspired by the prospect of certain and glorious victory, ennobled by the character of the work, and empowered by our God, let us go forth to take this country for Christ. One has said, "In the past the world's heroes were its great warriors—its destroyers; but its heroes of to-day are its saviours—God's messengers." Who does not applaud the heroic endeavors of the old statesmen? But they built nations and empires, grand though they were, only to see them crumble into ruins. He is dead, indeed, who is not stirred by the splendid achievements in the world of art, painting, drawing, statuary. So in the world of letters; so of architecture. How grandly these things display the wonderful capabilities of the human mind, and yet how tame compared with the work God has sent us to do. These things are splendid in their sphere, but ours begins upon a far higher plane. These are human creations, fashioned after human models, the products of splendid genius, but ours is after a divine model, born of infinite love and infinite wisdom. The material wrought into all human inventions is of the earth earthy, and subject to decay; ours is spiritual, to be changed from glory to glory.

Not so with God's messengers. We fight not as those that beat the air. We toil, but not in vain. We sow with the assurance that we shall reap. "For

as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shail doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Here we are assured of certain harvest, but we must bear in mind that the reaping will be proportioned to the sowing. He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly. A cup of cold water, a little refreshing, brings its reward. The smallest affairs are carefully noted. Mere crumbs of truth scattered here and there are as bread cast upon the waters, that shall be gathered up in the day of reaping. But if we would have an abundant harvest, we must sow abundantly. “He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Lord, we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have therefor? What shall we have? “You shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;” all that you have lost shall be centupled to you. “There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” We have the sacrifice, the toil, the weeping here. And who but a faithful minister knows the import of these

words, "*hath left* house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children"? Many of us, it is true, have neither houses or lands to leave, but we have what is infinitely more precious—father, mother, brothers or sisters, or wife and children. Who knows the bitter struggle through which we passed to conquer pride, ambition, love of ease and self-indulgence; to make our wills submissive, our hearts obedient to the heavenly calling; with what fear and trembling we left our homes and loved ones for our first fields of labor. But, thank God, we have demonstrated the truth of that paradox, "If thou wouldest be cheerful be sad." God filled our eyes, these earthly vessels, full to the brim with bitter tears, and then turned the water of tears into the wine of joy. This, indeed, is a "repentance not to be repented of." "A holy mourning out of which eternal joy doth grow." How true the promise of our Master: manifold more in this present life. We left one home, we have a thousand; a few friends, and have many—some of whom would die for us any day. Who among us has not found fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters by the score? But the Master in this, as in every feast, has left the best wine for the last. "Life everlasting:" * * * "shall come again bringing his sheaves with him." We have sown some seed—sown it in weakness and with weeping. Sown far too scantily and with much trepidation; but, thank God, we have sown, and the harvest is sure. All things else may fail—must ultimately fail; but God's word cannot.

You may be without visible seals to your ministry, though that is a rare exception; but toil on brother, God will take care of the precious seed, and the angels will gather the harvest by and by.

THE LIVING SAVIOUR.

By Rev. J. J. HALL, D. D.,
Pastor of Raleigh Baptist Tabernacle.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—HEBREWS vii:25.

Jesus our Saviour is a theme that will never wear out, nor will it lose its attractive power to the Christian. Do we not connect the salvation of a soul almost exclusively with the dying or the dead Christ? Here we find the writer associating it with the living Christ, the risen Lord, the exalted One. He is able to save to the uttermost, because "*He ever liveth.*"

Jesus on the Cross must ever appeal to our love and gratitude, and to behold Him there is to see the great procuring cause of our redemption. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour." And yet it does seem peculiarly fitting that our risen Lord should bestow salvation. If on the cross, when His hands and feet were nailed, when He appeared in utter helplessness, so that He responded not to the jeers of His enemies when they taunted Him with the words, "He saved others;

Himself He cannot save. If Thou be the Christ come down from the cross." O, if then He could fling wide open the gates of glory and say to the penitent thief at His side, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," how much more can He now, after having triumphed over death, hell and the grave, give eternal life to all who believe on Him?

To-night Christ appears to you as the risen, ascended, exalted Lord; as He who was dead, but is alive forevermore. It is the risen Christ who is able to save. He has been manifesting His power from the time He ascended on high to the present hour, and you can surely trust Him.

A risen Christ bestowing salvation presents to us two or three interesting thoughts, to which I invite your attention.

1. *We see Him bestowing upon the needy such blessings as He has purchased for them at a great cost.*

Peter tells us that "we are redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." And Paul says, "Ye are bought with a price." The price paid involved much—all that is included in the humiliation of the Son of God. He who was rich for our sake became poor. The lowly birth of Bethlehem, the opposition met, the sufferings endured, the agony of the cross, being made a curse for us—

"There's not a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan."

And having purchased by the sacrifice of love blessings for the perishing, He invites us to come and receive them. O, that the sinner might know how welcome he is to pardon, peace, strength, hope and eternal life.

I see a man of means who has become interested in some men imprisoned for debt, such as was common in days gone by. He learns their liabilities, and, at a great cost to himself, discharges the same, secures the receipt and takes it to the unfortunates, entreating them to obtain their discharge and go free. Some, with tears in their eyes, hear the news with joy, while others turn sullenly away from him. Christ Jesus, knowing the great cost of redemption, having met that cost on the cross, now lives to bestow that blessing upon all who come to Him to receive it.

Christ the Conqueror. As the great Conqueror our risen Lord gives salvation to all who believe on Him. To-day let us look upon our Saviour, not as the one despised and rejected of men, with bare back receiving cruel flagellation, nor with hands tied and a crown of thorns upon His brow.

“The head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now ;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor’s brow.”

“When he ascended on high he led captivity captive” that He might bestow gifts unto men. He went up as the triumphant One. Behold Him on

Mount Olivet after His resurrection. He is conversing with His disciples, and while His hands are raised to bless them He commences to ascend; higher and higher He rises; the astonished disciples gaze upward as His body seems smaller and smaller to their view. But look! the very battlements of heaven are thronged with angels who are gazing down upon this strange scene, and one enquires, "Who is this coming up from the earth?" And the answer is, "The King of glory." "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

Christ the Conqueror is a view of our Lord we do not often take, but it is a very old and a most precious one. Far back in the Garden of Eden it was predicted that He should "bruise the serpent's head." With the foot of a victor will He tread down Satan. In after years Isaiah, the prophet, enquired, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" This is but a picture of our victorious Lord. He has entered the enemy's land. He fought our foes for us, and vanquished them by His power. What are your enemies? Unbelief? Drink? Despondency? You

have no right to be overcome by them. You cannot subdue them. But Christ hath done it. O, come to Him, for He hath won the victory for you.

It was an old custom to divide the spoils. The great general would call his officers around him after the victory and be lavish with his gifts. Do you think the Captain of our salvation wishes to keep all He has obtained? Nay, He won the battle for us—sin and Satan, death and the grave are conquered foes. O, that you might share in the shouts of triumph!

II. Our risen Lord secures salvation for us, in that He has already entered heaven and there appears in the presence of God for us.

This is the underlying thought of the text, in which He is presented as our Advocate on high.

And surely we all need such a one. We are weak, sinful and ignorant. God is great and holy. Shall we rush into His presence? Can we plead innocence before Him? Surely not. And, beloved, how precious that we need not go alone. The intercessory work of Christ may not be easy for us to comprehend, but whatever mystery there is about it is a mystery of mercy. “Such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” And such a high priest we have in Jesus Christ.

“Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary,
They pour effectual prayers—
They strongly plead for me,
Forgive Him, O! forgive, they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die.”

We are saved because of that which He has done for us. His claims are admitted in the highest court in the universe.

By the bestowment of salvation the glory of our risen Lord is greatly promoted. Why is He called Jesus? To save His people from their sins. This is His great work now. He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour. By it He receives honor, love and praise. And, then, this work is His delight. The physician is made glad when his patients recover; the benefactor rejoices when destitution gives way to plenty and he beholds smiles of gladness on the face down which the tear of sorrow fell. So the joy of Jesus is realized when He bestows the great blessings of His love upon those who stand in great spiritual need.

In conclusion, I would say, these views ought to make the Saviour very near and precious to us. We have a living Christ. Supposing my child received a serious injury, and a friend said to me, "I knew a very skillful surgeon who made a specialty of just such cases as your son. I am sure that he cured many persons like your boy." "Where is he?" I enquire. "O!" says my friend, "he is dead; been dead for many years." It does me no good to know that he once lived and had great success. Tell me of one now who is able to help. A dead Christ cannot save. As a living Saviour He has as much power to say, "thy sins are forgiven thee," as when He walked this earth of ours.

Here then, is hope for all. No soul need despair. He is "able to save to the uttermost." God only

knows what that uttermost is. Many sins weigh upon you; years of guilt condemn you; weakness has come to you and the outlook is dark. But, cheer up, O ! soul, there is a mighty Saviour.

But the question after all is, Has He saved you ? You could go into a certain home in New York city and look upon a framed telegram. It has in the message but one word, and that is, "Saved." There is an exciting story connected with it. How a vessel was wrecked, many passengers found a watery grave. One was saved, and immediately upon reaching land he sent on the message to his loved ones, "Saved!" O ! has this been sent heavenward for you ? Is it written on your heart ? Do men see it as you walk these streets that you are a saved person ? If not, why not be saved to-night ?

In the year 1865 the Atlantic Cable was lost at sea. Three vessels, the Great Eastern, Medway and the Albany went out in search for it. They sank the grapnel two miles and a half deep. At last it was found, and great was the joy ; but it slipped and down it went. For two weeks longer the search was continued. Again it was found, and in breathless excitement it was brought up. This time they fastened it, and soon found it was responsive, and that by it a message could be sent. I am grappling for souls to-night. O ! that I could find on your part some expression of desire, of hope, and of faith. May Christ save every one of you.

THE LOST LEGACY.

By Rev. P. H. FLEMING,

Pastor of the Christian Church at Graham, N. C.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."—MARK xvi: 17, 18.

Many of us have been taught that the day of miracles passed away with the apostles. We are taught that the extraordinary gifts which were bestowed upon the primitive church, passed away with primitive times. This I seriously question, in fact I do not believe it, and have never believed such teaching. Neither do I see how anyone else can believe such teaching, if they will consider the words of Christ. Jesus in speaking to His disciples just before He was received up into heaven said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now we are taught that every creature through all time that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. We are taught to accept these words just as we find them. This commission did not pass away with the apostles. Salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus did not pass away with the apostle, nor with the primitive church.

But when we proceed just a little farther, and take something else that this same Jesus said, at the same time, to the same apostles, namely, when we take the words of the text: "And these signs shall follow

them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." These same teachers who claim that the commission to preach the gospel has not passed away, tell us that these signs which Christ says shall follow them that believe, passed away with the apostles. Why accept the words of Christ in one instance, and then reject them in the other? Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In this instance we accept the words of Christ, and profess to believe them. But when we come to the signs that Christ says shall follow them that believe, most people are ready to say that these signs passed away with the apostles, or with the primitive days of Christianity. Judging from the words of Jesus, do you think He intended to teach that these signs should follow none but the apostles or primitive Christians? Do the words of the Saviour—the words of the text—convey such an idea to candid searchers after Bible truth? Christ says, "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." And I believe He meant it for all time. His language does not limit these signs to a particular age or generation. But He says, "These signs shall follow them that believe."

Another instructor in biblical law comes forward and tells that there is ground for believing that the last twelve verses of the gospel by Mark were not written by that Evangelist.

That includes the text, and this last instructor would lead us out of the dilemma by striking out a part of the gospel by Mark. But we strike out nothing. The evidences of our expositor are not sufficient. We still cling to the text just as we have it, and stoutly affirm that Christ means what He says—and maintain that these signs did follow them that believed in the early days of Christianity. Let us see if these signs did follow the primitive followers of Christ.

"In my name shall they cast out devils." We know from Scripture that Jesus cast out many devils; and we learn from the same book of inspiration and revelation that the power to cast out devils in the name of Jesus followed the first believers and preachers of Christ. The seventy disciples that Christ sent out, two and two, into every city and place whither He Himself would come, returned to Christ after fulfilling their mission, with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

On one occasion the disciples saw some one casting out devils in the name of Jesus, and they forbade him. John reported the matter to Jesus, and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." "Jesus said unto him, forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." We learn from this

instance that the disciples seemed to think that this power to cast out devils belonged to Christ and His immediate personal followers. But Jesus shows by his reply that others besides his immediate and personal attendants had the right and power to cast out devils in His name. That others besides those who heard Him with the natural ears, and saw Him with the natural eyes, had the right and power to perform miracles in His name. This right and power belongs to them that believe. In the name of Jesus shall they cast out devils.

A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination followed Paul and his companions at Philippi. And she, though possessed of an evil spirit, cried, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

"God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul." The sacred writer informs us that handkerchiefs or aprons from the body of Paul were brought unto the sick and the disease departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. The text tells us that to cast out devils in the name of Jesus is one of the signs that shall follow them that believe. There must be belief before the power comes. There is no power without faith. We have recorded an instance in which certain vagabond Jews, exorcists, undertook to cast out evil spirits by calling over

them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preached." "The evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcome them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded." We know not exactly how long this power to cast out devils in the name of Jesus continued. It appears by the testimony of early writers that this power to cast out devils was more common among Christians than any other, and that it lasted longer. So we have clearly established that this sign, the power to cast out devils, followed the primitive believers for a considerable time after the ascension of Christ.

The next sign mentioned in the text is that they who believe, "shall speak with new tongues." They should speak a language which they had never learned; and what a vast amount of labor and time it saved the early preachers of Christianity. By a miracle they became masters of the language in which they were to preach Christ. No long years of tedious study as we have in this day to learn the language of those who know not God, in order to preach Jesus to them. This sign, says Christ, shall follow them that believe: "They shall speak with new tongues;" and this sign did follow believers in the early days of Christianity. O, what a grand means of spreading the gospel! What a divine testation of confirming the truth of the religion of Jesus Christ. If our missionaries

possessed this power of speaking with new tongues, how the gospel, it seems to me, would spread in heathen lands. I believe to speak with new tongues is a sign and power which belongs to those who are called of God to preach the gospel to those of a different tongue.

Does not Christ say that this sign shall follow them that believe. "They shall speak with new tongues." Did He say how long this sign should follow believers? Has He ever revoked the power of speaking with new tongues? If so, when? If Christ has not revealed the power of speaking with new tongues; then why do we accept the teachings of those who say, "that the attestation of Christianity is complete; and that other means are now sufficient to accomplish the end for which miracles were originally designed." Is such teaching in accordance with the words of Jesus? Jesus says plainly and pointedly, that "these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Have we no heathen in our day, who are just as ignorant of Jesus, as were many of those visited by Paul and other apostolic missionaries? Are their souls not just as precious in the sight of God as the souls of the heathen in the apostolic times? If so, why have the power denied us to speak with new tongues? By speaking with new tongues we could tell the dying heathen

at once of Jesus and His love. Think, may this power not yet belong to Christianity, but the benefits of which we reap not because of unbelief. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Then may we not be losing by unbelief, one of the greatest means of spreading the gospel? Have we any right to teach that this gift of speaking with new tongues passed away with the apostles, when Christ says that it shall follow them that believe? I ask candidly, have we a right to teach something contrary to the words of Christ because we have lost by unbelief, or because we have never had, on account of unbelief, some of the signs which accompanied believers in the early days of Christianity? Have we a right to so interpret the words of Jesus as to justify the position which we occupy? Honest minds answer, no! But I think that is just what we are doing when we say these extraordinary signs which accompany believers in the early stages of Christianity were doomed by the giver, Christ, to pass away with those days and people.

I am frank to admit that many of these signs are gone, to us, at present; but I believe it to be our fault. We lose them for want of faith. Christ says, "these signs shall follow them that believe." He does not limit the time. Many of the early Christians did speak with new tongues as on the day of Pentecost, when people from almost all parts of the then known world heard the gospel in their own tongue. While Peter preached in the house of Cornelius the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard

the word, and they spake with tongues and magnified God. Thus the first Gentile converts received this sign. They spake with new tongues. Paul laid his hands upon certain disciples at Ephesus that had been baptized unto John's baptism; and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Thus the gospel was introduced at Ephesus accompanied by one of the signs which Christ says shall follow them that believe: "They shall speak with new tongues." Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, says: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." We have proven to us beyond a doubt that the power to speak with new tongues followed the early Christians.

The third sign which the text mentions as following them that believe is that, "They shall take up serpents." Christ said to the seventy upon their return to Him: "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." We have an example in which the third sign mentioned in the text followed an early preacher of the gospel. Paul, shipwrecked on a barbarian island, gathered a bundle of sticks, laid them on the fire, and there came out of the heat a viper and fastened on his hand. The barbarians saw it and thought that vengeance had overtaken an escaped murderer. Paul "shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm." When the barbarians saw that no harm came to Paul "they changed their minds, and said that he was a god." We are told that Philip preaching that Christ

came at last to Hieropolis in Phrygia, and that "by his prayers, and after calling on the name of Christ, he procured the death, or at least the vanishing, of an enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

The fourth sign mentioned in the text is that if believers drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. If, when persecuted, believers are compelled by their persecutors to drink any deadly poison it shall not hurt them. This was an important promise to believers, especially in the early days of Christianity, when we remember that the practice of poisoning was common in that age, and that executions took place frequently by poisoning; and it might be expected that the enemies of Christians would seek in this way to destroy them. But the promise is that if believers drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.

The fifth sign which the text mentions as following them that believe, is this, that "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." We know many instances in the apostles' times in which this was practiced by believers. Many of the elders of the church had this power to heal the sick, as appears from James v:14—"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." This power to heal the sick is not enjoyed by the professors of religion at the present time, and it is wrong, in my opinion, to keep up the form of anointing with oil.

as is done by some denominations, when the power to heal is not there.

Peter possessed this power to a wonderful degree. "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing might overshadow some of them."

Ananias of Damascus placed his hands on blind Saul, and Saul received his sight. The father of Publius lay sick, "to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." Many other instances might be given, but it is enough for us to know that this sign, the power to heal the sick, followed believers in the first century and possibly longer. We have accounts of this anointing with oil and healing being practiced in the church two hundred years after Christ. When that miraculous gift of healing ceased, this right of anointing with oil was laid aside. How long miracles continued in the church has been a matter of keen dispute. Some say they continued no longer than the days of the apostles; others maintain that they continued long after. Burkitt, in his notes on the New Testament, says, "This power of working miracles continued in the church an hundred years after Christ's ascension, until Christianity had taken root in the hearts of men. Irenæus, a believer, second in succession after John, says, that many believers, besides the apostles, had this power of working miracles. Gibbon in his History of Rome says, "The Christian Church, from the time of the apostles and their first

disciples, have claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous power, the gift of tongues, of visions, and of prophecy, the power of expelling demons, of healing the sick, and of raising the dead. The knowledge of foreign language," he says, "was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himself was left to struggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect, whilst he preached the gospel to the natives of Gaul." We know that believers once possessed the power to work miracles, and we further know that Christ says, "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Now why is it that these signs do not now follow professing believers? Is it that there are none who believe? Or is it that the day of miracles has ceased? Most teachers would have us believe that the day of miracles has ceased. If so, why have they ceased? These same teachers tell us that the gospel is sufficiently rooted in the minds and hearts of men as not to need these extraordinary evidences of its truth. A very plausible reason, since these miraculous evidences do not follow believers in this day. Such an explanation justifies the position held by most professing Christians, and prevents an inquiry concerning Christ's words in the text. We must not infer that everyone of the early Christians possessed the power spoken of in the text. "For to one is given

by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." So we find that, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." This power of working miracles, of casting out devils, of speaking strange languages aided wonderfully in spreading and propagating the gospel. I do not think that the text teaches, that all who ever believed, would be enabled to work miracles, or that none except those who had saving faith would perform them. The teaching of the text is, that these signs would follow them that believe, "that is, would be manifestly displayed among them." I do not think, beloved, that the day of miracles has passed. It is true we have lost, or have never had, the power in our day to work miracles. But why have we not that power? We have the same source from which to obtain power. The same means, faith, by which it is obtained, is at our command, if we would use it. May it not be that we have not these wonderful signs following us, because we have not faith? "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Do not think that a man's salvation depends upon his working miracles, for such a thing

is not true. A man may perform miracles and yet be lost. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, not through the power to work miracles. "And though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity I am nothing." I am firmly of the opinion that believers may have power to perform miracles, when called of God for the special work of propagating the gospel. If necessary, miraculous evidences will be given to establish the gospel, provided the believer exercises the necessary faith.

But seeing we have not power to work miracles, let us inquire into the reason of such a lack.

Why have we not these signs following us in this day? There must be, there is, a reason. What can it be? Is it because there is no need of such wonderful and strong evidences to convince men of the truth, and bring them to Christ? Certainly not. We have heathen, I think, as ignorant of Jesus as those of the apostolic times. Infidels, atheists, skeptics are in our midst, and the church is destitute of these strong evidences of primitive times. We have a great deal of form, but very little power of godliness. Will not some standard be raised to stay the coming enemy of unbelief? We have God's Word, and it, with its many precious promises, is sufficient to subdue every enemy. Will we as professors not avail ourselves of God's promises, and reap the benefit derived therefrom? Romanism, with its errors and fabulous miracles; spiritualism, with its pretended communication with departed spirits; mate-

rialism, with its self-existent and self-directed theory ; each, it seems to me, demands the return of these primitive gifts which believers once enjoyed. If the occasion exists, and it is evident to my mind that it does, why do not the signs which once followed believers follow them now ? There is but one answer which I deem correct ; and it is this, namely, a decline in faith brings a decline in miraculous gifts. I believe the power to work miracles has been lost for a time by want of faith and neglect of Christian duty. When we have faith sufficient we will have a return of the wonderful gifts.

Did the disciples ever fail to perform miracles when they tried ? Yes. We have one noted instance in which a father, who had a son possessed with a dumb spirit, besought the disciples to cast the spirit out, and they could not. Now the day of miracles had not passed, but the power to cast the dumb spirit out of the boy the disciples had not. What was the reason of this lack of power ? I suppose our modern teachers would say the day of miracles had passed, or that the gospel was sufficiently rooted in the minds and hearts of men as not to need such a miraculous evidence of the power of Christ. Such was not the reason. Christ tells the disciples when they asked Him privately, why they could not cast out the spirit. "This kind," says Jesus "can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fastings." The disciples had not used the means at hand by which they could cast out a dumb spirit, and hence their failure. May we not from this instance learn why it is that professing

believers have not the signs mentioned in the text following them to-day? May it not be that they use not the means which bring these wonderful gifts, and hence they have them not. "These signs shall follow them that believe." God who can and will save a man, when he accepts Christ, can and will make a sick man well when the necessary faith is exercised by the afflicted. If we, dear friends, have, by unbelief, lost these signs which Christ says shall follow them that believe, let us by faith find them. Remember that there is no power without faith. Any departure from God's law is attended by loss of power. Did prophets cease to be before the Jews lost the power of godliness? Did the Jewish nation decline before they forgot God? Did these wonderful signs which followed believers in the early days of the gospel cease to exist before the believers lost the faith by which these signs were wrought? Ah! beloved, I fear we have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

Without a belief in miracles, the sad-hearted mother imprints the last kiss upon the brow of her babe cold in death, with never a hope of seeing and meeting her little one in some better clime. Without a belief in miracles, we say good-bye to loved ones in the hour of death, and there is no hope of meeting where parting is no more. Be of good cheer, beloved. God will gather up all thy loved ones, and you shall see them again. Yes, we believe in the resurrection. We preach it; and we like to think of it. Oh! it was sad when we said farewell; our lips quivered,

our eyes bedimmed with tears, our hearts sad ; our lips moved, but not a word they said ; our hands pressed their hands, our lips kissed the brow of the loved dead ; it was our hearts that said farewell. The heart spoke not in words, but we knew it was saying good-bye.

It is sad to say farewell to those who are dying ; but how sweet to think of greeting on the eternal shore of rest, sweet rest. We believe there have been miracles. To doubt the miracles of the past, is to doubt God's Word. We believe there will be miracles. To doubt the miracles which will be is to deny the resurrection. We believe in miracles ; we hope in them, and we love to sing—

“ We shall sleep, but not forever,
 There will be a glorious dawn !
 We shall meet to part no never,
 On the resurrection morn !
 From the deepest caves of ocean,
 From the desert and the plain,
 From the valley and the mountain,
 Countless throngs shall rise again.

When we see a precious blossom
 That we tended with such care,
 Rudely taken from our bosom,
 How our aching hearts despair!
 Round its little grave we linger,
 Till the setting sun is low,
 Feeling all our hopes have perished
 With the flow'r we cherished so.

We shall sleep, but not forever,
 In the lone and silent grave;
 Blessed be the Lord that taketh,
 Blessed be the Lord that gave.
 In the bright eternal city,
 Death can never come!
 In His own good time He'll call us,
 From our rest, to Home, sweet Home.”

When we lay our loved ones, cold in death, down in the dark and silent grave, it is with a hope that we shall meet them in a better clime.

When a mother buries the brightest flower of her household in the cheerless grave, it is with a hope that it will come forth on the resurrection morn, and blossom ever more in an eternal home of love.

We believe there will be a resurrection. To doubt the resurrection, is to enshroud loving and tender hearts in the blackest gloom of midnight. It is to say good-bye to happiness, to heaven, and to loved ones at life's latest hour, without a hope of ever seeing them in that rest which "remaineth for the people of God." There can be no resurrection without a miracle. We believe in the miracles of the past; we believe there will be miracles in the future; then why not believe now the words of Jesus, when He says "These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—John i:1.

This is the first utterance of St. John the Evangelist in attestation of the essential Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of all men, "the beloved disciple" knew him best, and he wrote by inspiration of God, the Holy Ghost. His testimony is therefore true.

No one will deny that St. John, in this verse, designates Christ as "the Word," and accords unequivocally to Him the attributes of God.

First, underived self-existence, for, "in the beginning was the Word." By the expression, "and the Word was with God," equality with the Father and the Holy Ghost is explicitly declared, and the climax follows—an irresistible conclusion from the previous predicates—"and the Word was God."

If, then, Christ was the Word, and the Word was God, then was Christ verily God.

In John i: 3, we have these words: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Omnipotence is an inalienable attribute of God. He who made all things is God. All things were made by Christ, so Christ is God. In John i: 12, it is said, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God." This power

to become the Sons of God, is in the gift of God alone. If Christ bestowed and still bestows this power, then Christ is God.

In John iii: 13, Christ says to Nicodemus, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Here omnipresence is claimed by Christ, for God only could be on earth, and still remain in heaven.

Christ claimed and exercised the power to forgive sins. When the Pharisees reasoned within themselves, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Christ proved the divinity He claimed, and exhibited present omniscience, as well as omnipotence, by reading the thoughts of their hearts, and saying to the sick of the palsy, whose sins he had pronounced forgiven, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

The miracles performed by Jesus Christ attest His divinity. They were wrought by the power of God and He claimed to exercise this power in His own right and name. He suspended the laws of Nature at will. Asleep "in the hinder part of the ship," He was awakened by His affrighted disciples when a tempest came down on the Sea of Tiberias. He spake, and the cyclone was hushed to a whisper, and the angry billows fawned at His feet.

He gave the people bread in the wilderness, multiplying a few loaves and fishes by the same creative power by which He had "framed the worlds." He healed all manner of diseases, cast out devils, gave

sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead. All these wonders were wrought in His own name and in virtue of His absolute, inherent, substantial oneness with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. To these we must add that crowning miracle—His own resurrection, for “He arose from the dead on the third day.” These things were not done in a corner. Christ’s miracles were many and public, invariably beneficent in purpose and result, and were (with but few exceptions) done in the presence of His enemies. Their genuineness was not impugned by His contemporaries, and there is no human testimony which in point of credibility can be compared with the concurrent utterances of the evangelists and apostles.

In view of His wonderful works, and of the miraculous and minute fulfillment of numerous and seemingly conflicting prophecies in relation to His birth, His ministry, His death and His exaltation, it is strange that the truth of His perfect *humanity* has not been assailed by deists and agnostics, rather than the impregnable stronghold of His divinity.

The timid seeker after truth, who came to Him by night, not only said, “We know that thou art a teacher come from God,” but added, “for no man can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him.” “Immanuel” was one of the prophetic designations of the promised Messiah, and, being interpreted, is “God with us.” How deep the significance of this name appears, as we ponder the words of Nicodemus, “except God be with him”!

After His resurrection, Christ said to one of his disciples, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing" "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

The witnesses of His ascension—"the eleven," and they that were with them—"worshipped Him as He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

St. Jude calls Christ "the only wise God, our Saviour." St. Paul says that "He is God over all, blessed forever"; that "all things were created by him, and for him"; that "He is before all things, and by him all things consist, and that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Isaiah styles Him "the mighty God, the Everlasting Father," and represents Him as calling on lost sinners, saying, "Look unto Me, and be saved, for *I am God*, and there is none else, and beside me there is no Saviour."

It would be easy to multiply citations from Holy Scripture attesting this glorious truth, but we will close with Christ's own declarations: "Before Abraham *was*, I AM," and "*I and my Father are one.*"

It has thus been shown that Jesus the Christ publicly, frequently and explicitly asserted for Himself ineffable unity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and either this claim was true or He was false. He "who spake as never man spake," was either very God, or the veriest impostor. Faith in falsehood is death to the soul, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

is life from the dead, for its vitalizing, transforming power has raised millions of our race from the death in trespasses and in sins to a life of righteousness. To sincere seekers after truth in every age, He who is "the Life, the Truth, and the Way," has not left Himself without witness; but it is true now, as it was when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," that "the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned." It is as true now, as then, that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

If they only had ears to hear, with what startling emphasis would this declaration of the Saviour, whom they reject and despise, penetrate the souls of scoffers and skeptics in these "latter days"—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though *one rose from the dead.*"



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